DELHI UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

THE GIFT
THE FORD FOUNDATION

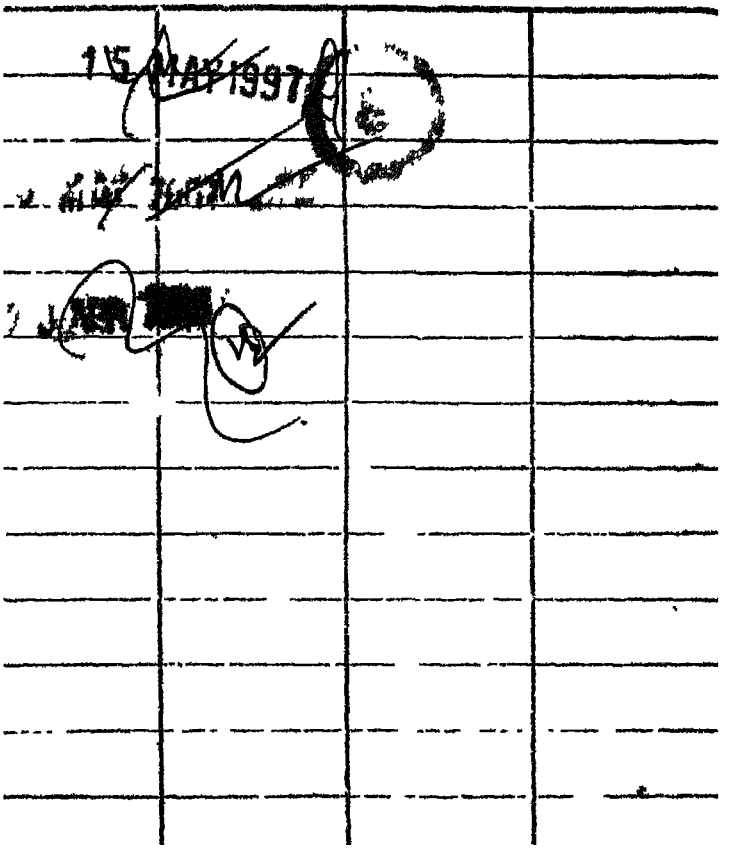
SHOUT
SHARE
IT

DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Cl No. Y73(Q5) ; 356·2·N D7

Ac. No. 571510 Date of release of loan

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below. An overdue charge of 10 np. will be charged for each day the book is kept overtime.



THE

JEWS IN INDIA

AND THE

FAR EAST

(Being a Reprint of Articles contributed to "Church and Synagogue". With Appendices.)

BY THE

Rev. J. HENRY LORD.

GREENWOOD PRESS, PUBLISHERS
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Lord, James Henry.
The Jews in India and the Far East.

Reprint of the 1907 ed. printed at the Mission Press, Kolhapur, India.
1. Jews in India--Collected works. 2. India--Social life and customs--Collected works. I. Title.
DS135.I6167 1976 301.45'19'24054 70-97292
ISBN 0-8371-2615-0

Originally published in 1907 by the Mission Press, Kolhapur, India

Reprinted in 1976 by Greenwood Press, Inc.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 70-97292

ISBN 0-8371-2615-0

Printed in the United States of America

PREFATORY NOTE.

The pages which follow are a reprint, with but slight alteration, of articles which appeared quarterly in the *Church and Synagogue* Magazine,* between July 1903 and January 1906. They are reprinted not so much because considered by their author worthy of reproduction, as in order to invite criticism and correction. In the writer's opinion the interesting subject with which the following pages deal is one but imperfectly investigated at present; and it is in the hope that more light may be thrown on the vexed and obscure questions connected with it that he has been induced to re-issue these articles in their present more convenient and accessible form. In the absence, for the most part, of historical records, internal evidence and the results of comparative study of the annals and present customs of other nations,—for instance, of those of Kurdistan and China,—and kindred sources of information have to be brought into request to help towards the solution of the points at issue.

The writer feels that his work is incomplete for another reason also. It would have been his wish to have added something more in detail about the Jews of China, of Aden, etc. Information regarding the above is meagre,

* Obtainable from the Rev. the Organizing Secretary, Parochial Missions to the Jews at Home and Abroad, A. C. S. Office, 39 Victoria, Street, Westminster, London.

but is daily being added to. For the present, however, he is compelled to offer the pages which follow to the reader in their all too unfinished form, hoping only that the objects mentioned above may be served by his present effort.

Mazagon, Bombay.
January 1907.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

I.

THE BENE-ISRAEL OF BOMBAY, Page 2. —The Legends of the Bene-Israel—A possible clue—The Indian home of the Bene-Israel—Surnames and other names of the Bene-Israel—Religious customs of the Bene-Israel—Certain religious observances in vogue amongst the Bene-Israel not in common use amongst Jews elsewhere—Use of frankincense—The Nazarite vow—Use made of Subja, Malida, Goat's Liver, &c.—The cup of blessing—The kiss of peace—Ben-Israelite modes of observing Hebrew fasts and festivals.

II.

HOW THE BENE-ISRAEL AND OTHER EARLY JEWISH IMMIGRANTS MAY HAVE COME TO INDIA, Page 40. —Various theories on the Subject—Opportunities of travel open to Israelites of old—Sopàr, a famous North-Konkan Port and sacred city of old—A possible ancient home of the Bene-Israel—The principal home of the Israelite Dispersion—The Rev. J. H. Brühl on the Israelites in Kurdistan and Persia—Kurdistan contains a population within a population—Probable coalescence of some of the Western Dispersion with Christianity and Mahommedanism—Early Persian Christianity in evidence in India—Persian Christianity in Malabar side by side with an ancient Jewish community, both possessing charters engraved on copper-plates from the old Rajahs of Cochin—Israelite

settlement in India apparently not accomplished all at one time—Conclusion from foregoing—A corroboration—Development of Israelite settlements on Indian coasts probably affected by caprices of local rule—The early navigation of Indian seas.

III.

THE JEWS OF MALABAR, Page 73. —Ethnological considerations—The problem of colour—Origin of the distinction "White" and "Black"—The so-called "Black" Jews, including a third class, are representatives of the earliest Jewish settlers—Analogy of the Bene-Israel of Bombay—Several writers of weight have recognized the true distinction—Grounds of the claim of the M'yukhasim to represent the original Jewish settlers—An imaginary parallel drawn from the known circumstances of Jewish settlements in Bombay—A wide comparative study is needed if the Hebrew race-problems of India are to be justly weighed—A likely history of Jewish communal development in Malabar—Conclusion of present ethnological enquiry—Numbers and location of the Jews of Malabar—Jews Town, Cochin—The town of Ernaculam—The vicinity of the ancient Cranganore—Parur—Chennanmangalum—Malah—Numbers of the Malabar Jews—The Copper-plate Charters—The official chronicles of the Malabar Jews—The adjudication of Rabbi Maharikash.

IV.

FURTHER ETHNOLOGICAL QUESTIONS, AS THEY AFFECT THE BENE-ISRAEL IN COMMON WITH OTHER INDIAN JEWS, Page 106. —The Bene-Israel and "racial purity"—The claim of coloured Jewish communities to "purity" of Jewish descent. What *is* "purity" of Jewish descent?—Talmudic views on the subject more

rigid than earlier Jewish ones—The Paris Sanhedrim on the subject—Indian Jews probably date back behind Talmudic times—The question judged by ancient Jewish criteria—Intermixture with other than Israelites at least for long abjured amongst the Bene-Israel—Conclusion.

APPENDIX I.—Numbers and Distribution of the Jews of India.

APPENDIX II.—List of the majority of Surnames of the Bene-Israel.

APPENDIX III.—R. Moses ben Maimon on the Indian Jews.

APPENDIX IV.—Benjamin of Tudela, and India.

APPENDIX V.—Languages spoken by the Jews of India.

APPENDIX VI.—Note on the suggestion of the connection of *Dàrfùlnìchà San* with the Prayer *Neyela*.

APPENDIX VII.—List of Literature dealing with the Jews of India.

THE JEWS IN INDIA AND THE FAR EAST.

SO ubiquitous in its character is the Jewish race, that it will probably occasion small surprise to our readers when it is stated that our Indian Empire contains over seventeen thousand persons professing the Jewish faith. Who exactly these are, whence and when they came to these distant shores, what is their present condition, what is being done to make known to them the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*—these and similar enquiries will form the theme of the series of papers which, if God will, it is proposed to write, and of which the present article forms the first and introductory instalment.

Some of the Jewish residents of India are Jews of the usual modern type, who have been attracted to Indian shores in comparatively recent years, chiefly for purposes of trade and commerce. But two, at any rate, of the Jewish communities of India, namely, the Jews of the Malabar Coast, and the "Bene-Israel" of the Bombay Presidency, are communities of a peculiarly interesting and historic character, and rank fitly beside other such strangely unusual Jewish remnants as the Falashas of Abyssinia, the Yemenite Jews of Arabia Felix, and the barely surviving, but now partially resuscitated handful of Jews at K'ai-Fung-Fu, in China. It is well known also that Afghanistan has some peculiar ethnological problems, bearing upon a possible Israelite origin for certain of its races, at which it may be possible to glance in the course of these papers.

* Owing to the length to which these papers grew, this last point was not dealt with at this time.

I.

THE BENE-ISRAEL OF BOMBAY.

The Bene-Israel of Bombay form a community important in their numbers, amounting roughly to some 10,000 souls. A rapid change has come over them socially and religiously during the passage of the last century, and especially during the last fifty years; and the transition is still in progress. Not only have their manners become modified, but their localities also have largely shifted. A hundred years ago there would have been hardly a Bene-Israel to be found resident in Bombay, or in any of the larger towns of the Presidency. Though occupying a distinctly respectable caste-position amongst their neighbours, they were essentially a rural class, scattered amongst numerous villages spread over a tract of country to the south-east of Bombay. A chief occupation among them was that of oil-pressing; and perhaps it may occur to my readers that such an occupation is not contrary to what we might expect to find amongst a people presumably hailing from an oil-bearing country like Palestine. This characteristic occupation of theirs gained for them amongst their neighbours the appellation of *Teli* or *Oilmen*; and they were commonly designated as *Shanvar Teli*, or *Saturday Oilmen*, to distinguish them as oilmen who observed Saturday as their holy-day, from Mahomadans of the same occupation who observed Friday, or from certain Hindus who observed some other day.† However, although oil-pressing was a chief occupation, and a characteristic one amongst the Bene-Israel, it was by no means their only one. Many, then

† Especially Hindu *Somvar Teli*, or *Monday Oilmen*. The latter do not yoke their bullocks on Mondays.

as now, were cartmen, small farmers, petty shopkeepers, and many too, then as now were artizans, especially carpenters. Occasionally a timber, grain, or grass merchant may be found amongst them. Apparently in by-gone days it suited them to remain in comparative obscurity. As foreigners on an alien shore they, perhaps, welcomed retirement from political notice, and preferred to escape unpleasant attentions by remaining unobserved. Perhaps it was that they had no alternative but to remain in rural obscurity. But however that was, under the favouring auspices of the British rule all this has changed; and the Bene-Israel have of recent years migrated in considerable numbers into Bombay and into other large centres of population and communal activity, such as Poona, Thana, Karachi, Ahmedabad and Dharwar. In the city of Bombay there are now some four thousand of these people; and in Poona nearly a thousand. Moreover they are rising fast in the educational scale; and, while in Bombay numbers still remain artizans, contractors, and the like, others plentifully occupy posts as clerks in various services of government, railways, municipality, mercantile companies, and so forth; while some have risen so high as to be doctors, engineers, subordinate judges, and representatives of similarly learned professions. While they are, however, in this condition of rapid flux, it is still possible to go into the ancient haunts of the Bene-Israel in Konkan villages, and to find numbers of them still engaged in their former occupations, agricultural and otherwise; and in some of the more out-of-the-way villages to find them in a very primitive condition of life altogether, whether as regards modes of living ideas of clothing, absence of religious and secular learning, and what not. The primitive oil-mill, with its heavily-weighted superstructure all made to bear down on to a single round-headed

pivot revolving in a small chamber or socket formed in the heart of a large beam or trunk of a tree, set up vertically in the ground, may still be seen going its ceaseless round, propelled by the patient bullock, which is blindfolded to prevent its becoming giddy in its gyrations within the small circle allotted to its movements. In a few more years this older order of things will assuredly have still further passed away. We stand just now at the dividing line, occupying a point of advantage in our enquiries for linking the past with the future, which cannot much longer be ours. Just now we can gather up legends and traditions which have come down it may be from remote ages, and with, perhaps, but little change, which will, unless now recorded, have tended to fade away. We can at the present moment register various practices, rites and customs of the Bene-Israel, which perhaps are of nearly immemorial usage, but which are bound to give way before the progress of new ideas, whether Christian or modern-Judaistic.

An early enterprizer * in this matter of enquiry concerning the antiquities and recent condition of the Bene-Israel, was the well-known and justly renowned Dr. John Wilson, of the Free Church of Scotland, for many years the head of that Society's Mission and College in Bombay, and closely associated with the Bombay University, of which he became the Chancellor. He submitted in 1838 and 1839 an account of the Bene-Israel of Bombay to the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, of which he was President; and afterwards, in 1847, published an abridgment of it in his *Lands of the Bible*.† Again, in a

* The allusions of Buchanan (*Christian Researches*, pp. 234-5, eleventh Edition), and those of Dr. Joseph Wolff, who visited Bombay in 1837, are of an exceedingly brief nature.

† Second Vol. pp. 667-678.

pamphlet published in 1854, and again in 1865, entitled *The Bene-Israel of Bombay; An Appeal for their Christian Education*, he added further information regarding them. Besides writing about this people, Dr. Wilson did much to ameliorate their condition by establishing numerous schools for them in many villages, and in providing higher education for several, including a knowledge of Hebrew, by the establishment of scholarships for them at his Society's Institution in Bombay. Although the first pioneers of education amongst the Bene-Israel had been the American Congregational Mission, which had opened some schools amongst them as early as in 1818, and had been followed in 1826 by the Madras Jews' Society, which for some four years, it is said, had 165 scholars in six schools started by Mr. Sargon, a converted Jew of Cochin, yet it is Dr. Wilson's educational work, started in 1837, that is on the lips of every Bene-Israel of the present day in the villages about Bombay. Strange to say, it is from among Dr. Wilson's old pupils that several Bene-Israel are now to be found who have become pillars of revived Judaism amongst their brethren. Much information about the Bene-Israel of Bombay has more recently been collected and published in various volumes of the *Bombay Gazeteer* (especially in Vol. xviii., on Poona, pp. 506–536) prepared under the able editorship of Sir James Campbell, and published by the Bombay Government. It is fair to say that this account is disliked by the Bene-Israel themselves, who consider it derogatory to their reputation, inasmuch as it describes various superstitious and heathenish customs into which they are said to have partially lapsed. A most interesting instalment of what was intended to be a much larger work and which might still become so, should circumstances favour its publication, appeared some fifteen years ago as a pamphlet under the name of *A Sketch*

of the History of Bene-Israel and an Appeal for Their Education. The writer is Mr. Haim Samuel Kehimkar, President of the Israelite School in Bombay, an ardent and veteran labourer for the welfare of his people. A Ben-Israel himself, he writes with an intimate personal knowledge of the customs and traditions of his people, and the only ground for regret is that his treatise is so short, it being, as already stated, but a fragment of an intended work. We shall have occasion in these papers to draw largely on the information in its pages. The *Jewish Year-Book* for 1902-3 and 1904-5, and one of the early volumes of the new *Jewish Encyclopedia* each contain an article on the Bene-Israel of Bombay. Beyond the repositories of information mentioned, there is little besides that has been written in English* at first hand about the Bene-Israel community. They themselves possess no documentary records of their history. Certain well-defined legends or traditions survive amongst them, and certain time-honoured customs of the greatest significance are still punctiliously kept up amongst most of them. Out of such material as this, coupled with the living fact of the people themselves, as they come before us to-day, and with the additional help of such ethnological conclusions as can be drawn from general appearance, contour of features, complexion, and the like, and aided by occasional rays of light from the comparison of contemporary history, it is that the would-be depicter of the present life and past history of this remarkable and interesting people has to construct his treatise to-day.

* In German, Ritter's *Erdkunde*, (Band IV. Erste Abtheil. pp. 594-601. Zweita Abtheil. p. 1087—Berlin, 1835-36) and in Hebrew *Eben Saphir* (Mayence, 1875), may be consulted. The following should also be added:—*The Travels of Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel*, Madras, 1832, (in English); *Eight years in Asia and Africa*, By R. Benjamin II. Hanover, 1859 (in Hebrew); and the *Travels of Solomon*, By Solomon Reinmann of Cochin, edited by W. Schur. Vienna.

One noteworthy feature of this community has so far not been remarked upon, and must by no means be omitted. It is the prowess of the Bene-Israel, in the not far distant past, in the art of soldiery. In the days more especially of the East India Company, many of the most valued private soldiers and officers of the military service were drawn from this community. At the time of the Indian Mutiny the Bene-Israel to a man stood faithful to British rule. The earliest information of the impending outbreak of the mutiny at Kolhapur was given by a Ben-Israelite officer named Moosaji Israel (*i. e.*, Moses Israel.)* Ben-Israelite soldiers as a rule rose high in their regiments, many becoming non-commissioned, and some commissioned officers. Among the finest specimens of the Ben-Israelite community are still many veteran pensioners, some in receipt of special extra allowances, such as an extra rupee a day as possessor of the Order of British India, or other decorations for good service and gallantry. But now, unfortunately, soldiering has ceased to have much attraction for the Bene-Israel, as the old avenues to distinction in the army are largely closed to them by the modern system of what is known as "promotion by caste returns"; which means that a soldier, however meritorious his services, has nevertheless small chance of promotion,

* The following is his record, as quoted by Mr. Haim Samuel Kehimkar from registers of the service:—Moosajee Israel was enlisted on 1st April, 1842. He was promoted to Jemadar on 1st January, 1853, and was a Native Adjutant at the time. He was present at the Battle of Hydrabad with the 8th Regt. N.I.,—medal. He was present at the action of Kolhapur with 27th Regt. N.I.—medal. He is in possession of 1st Class Order of British India. On 31st July, 1857, he gave first information of the Mutiny to the officers of the 27th Regiment, N.I. While on the above duty, his mother was killed, and property to the value of Rs. 7,000 plundered by mutineers. Was transferred from 12th Regt. N.I., by special sanction, to be appointed Subedar-Major, 17th Regt. N.I., on the 24th January, 1876. Is a very meritorious native officer of excellent character and abilities.—W. F. FIELD, *Lieutenant Adjutant, 12th Regiment, N.I.*

unless at the same time the men of his own caste form a considerable proportion in the regiment. Under such a system, a minority like the Bene-Israel have scarcely a chance of rising high in the service, and as a consequence their zeal for the army dies down. The writer remembers an officer of a regiment writing to him to ask if he could not induce some Bene-Israel to join his regiment, as he had formerly had experience of such in a previous regiment, and had found them a particularly useful class of men. On handing on the request, however, as desired, it failed to arouse any enthusiasm amongst those for whom it was intended.

And the name "Bene-Israel" itself—whence is it, and how is it to be accounted for? There are those who, because of this name would have us fly to the conclusion at once that these must surely be descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes. Perhaps, instead of plunging into sudden surmizes on this rather fascinating topic, it may be well to hold our judgment a little in suspence until other considerations may have been brought before us in the course of these papers. Certain it is that, as a fact, this community, although their views are now, in this as in many other matters, becoming modified, have consistently since their observation by Europeans been found objecting to the term "Jew," accounting it to be one of reproach, and have in its place resolutely claimed for themselves, as the only correct title, the appellation of "Bene-Israel." This term, as we shall hardly need to tell our readers, is simply the Hebrew (*B'nei-Israel*) for "Sons of Israel," or, as the same phrase is continually translated in the Old Testament, "Children of Israel."*

* The singular of this is *Ben-Israel*, which is used throughout these papers, where the singular is needed. For adjectival purposes *Ben-Israelite* is employed. We prefer the spelling *Bene-Israel* to *Beni-Israel*, as being nearer the Hebrew.

A theory which has been put forward by Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar, to account for the adoption of the term, and which does not seem a wholly unlikely one, we give in his own words:—

"The Israelites of the Bombay Presidency are led to believe that the name 'Beni-Israel' was adopted by their ancestors during the time the Mahomadan power prevailed in India, and Islamism was propagated by the sword. The hatred which the Mahomadans bear towards the name "Yehoodi" (Jew), as may be seen from the Koran, is in itself a ground to believe that their ancestors, for fear of being compelled to renounce their religion or of losing their lives and property, thought it expedient to adopt the name less hated by the followers of Mahomed, viz., Beni-Israel (children of Israel), which served both objects—the retention of their ancient name and faith, and the preservation of their lives and property. One fact may be prominently brought forward in corroboration of the above statement. During the reign of Tippoo and the prosperity of the East India Company, that is, during the second Mysore War (1780-84), several Beni-Israel, who had enlisted themselves in the service of the Honourable Company, were taken captives by Tippoo's army, and would have been put to the sword had they declared themselves 'Yehoodim.' They were released in consequence of Tippoo's mother having begged of her son to spare the lives of the Beni-Israel so much talked of in the Koran, and whom she had never had the opportunity of seeing in India. In course of time their descendants made it a point to deny that they were "Yehoodim" or Jews, and felt insulted if anyone called them by that name, for a reproachful word, as *Kufree* (heretic) was sure to follow."

Although the above theory, which would account for the title "Bene Israel" by the exigencies of certain local circum-

stances, possesses, as we have already said, much inherent reasonableness, it must also be borne in mind that, historically, "Bene-Israel" is a much more ancient term than "Jew," and a much more comprehensive one; and it may depend upon the origin we assign to the Bene-Israel of Bombay, and the date to which we ascribe the separation of their ancestors from the main body of their people, as to whether we consider that the term "Jew," could ever with propriety have been applied to this remnant of Israel.

We will now proceed to consider the traditions and legends of the Bene-Israel, and some of their characteristic observances, and also the locality of their Indian home, together with other matters connected with their obscure past, but very real present.

THE LEGENDS OF THE BENE-ISRAEL.

The traditions of the Bene-Israel regarding their arrival in India are of a sensational and romantic kind. Some sixteen or eighteen hundred years ago, they say, their ancestors were wrecked on Indian shores. They had come from "*northern parts*"* They came as refugees from persecution and political overthrow, but speedily found themselves again involved in disaster ere they reached the shores on which they had intended to establish their new home. Only fourteen of their number—seven men and seven women—survived the shipwreck, and these were cast ashore at a village called Nawgaon, in the close proximity of Alibag, the present chief town of the Kolaba Collectorate, and situated about twenty miles south of Bombay. Here they buried

* Dr. Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*. Vol. II p. 667.

the bodies of their comrades, as many as were washed ashore. Near a burying ground containing some five hundred other graves of members of their community, the Bene-Israel of to-day show two mounds said to contain the remains of their shipwrecked ancestors, males buried in the tumulus to the north, and the females in the one to the south.

The above embodies the legend of the Bene-Israel as to the mode of their origin on Indian shores. But side by side with this it is necessary to draw attention to another ancient legend affecting a different class of Indian residents altogether. In one's intercourse with the inhabitants of the Bombay Konkan and Deccan, and especially with those of the former, one is continually being struck by meeting a set of people who by their peculiarly fair complexion and usually light grey eyes arrest attention. These are Chitpavan Brahmans, a class from whom were derived the Peshwas or Brahman rulers of Poona. They now rank as high as any Brahmans; but history goes to show that this position was not gained in a moment, and that for many a long while they suffered from much disqualification in the eyes of strict Brahmans. Some authorities have believed that these did not enter India by land, but by way of the sea; and one of the Puràns (the *Sahyàdri Khand*), relates that when Parashuràm (one of the incarnations of Vishnu), to whom in Hindoo mythology is attributed the reclamation of the western lowlands of Hindustan from the sea, had so defiled himself on account of his slaughter of the Kshatryas, that Brahmans refused to perform any purificatory rites for him, there happened to be cast on shore by the sea the bodies of fourteen

shipwrecked foreigners. These corpses Parashurám resuscitated, taught them Brahman rites, and made them his purificators. For them he reclaimed the Konkan, by inducing the sea to retire for the space of a bow-shot. This bow-shot, in the hands of the superhuman archer, covered a distance of no less than thirty miles; and on the long strip of territory thirty miles wide thus obtained, Parashurám settled his new-made Brahmans, who, for reasons variously assigned, became called Chitpavan Brahmans.

Mr. Haim Samuel Kéhimkar* raises the enquiry whether the Chitpavan Brahmans to whom such curious legends attach, and whose countenances differentiate them from Indians generally, may not have been of one common stock with the Bene-Israel, some of the latter of whom, he suggests, may at the time of the shipwreck have been carried to other spots on the shore of the Konkan. For ourselves, while fully recognizing the significance of the similarities between the two sets of legends, we feel bound to ask whether it does not seem altogether more probable that in a search after the wonderful which is so common to man, the Bene-Israel have been led during process of time to import into their own history portions of an existing tradition of the country rife round about them, and thus to appropriate a legend which chiefly or wholly pertains to another class of people altogether? The legend may have been so far founded on fact in that the original landing of the Bene-Israel on Indian coasts may have been connected with a shipwreck while they were making for parts beyond: or the tradition may be

* *Sketch of the History of Bene-Israel*, p. 2.

wholly fabulous, and a mere growth of ages. It was forcibly assailed by a correspondent in the *Jewish Chronicle* of February 21st, 1902; and his contention was hardly set at rest by the defence of the popular view which appeared in the issue of the same paper of April 5th, 1902. That the Bene-Israel at certain stages of their career as a community in India have been the victims of credulity is clear from other facts; for it must have been by a distinct reach after the purely marvellous, and a plain mixing of the real and true with the wholly fanciful and imaginary, that the Bene-Israel accustomed themselves in process of time to an annual pilgrimage to a village in the Konkan where they had a tradition that Elijah the prophet had appeared to them, and had thence ascended to heaven. To the fair kept annually in honour of this supposed event, we shall have occasion to refer again hereafter

A Possible Clue.

What is apparently more solid fact, and more pertinent in its bearing on the question of the mode of settlement of the Bene-Israel on Indian shores, is the circumstance that within about ten miles of the village of Nawgaon (or "New Village" as the name signifies), which the Bene-Israel claim as the spot of their first landing and abode in India, is (almost certainly) the site of an historic and very ancient port and emporium of foreign commerce, to which in olden times ships resorted from distant countries, especially from Egypt and the Persian Gulf. The place possesses a name which by its peculiar spelling and pronunciation has lent itself to all

kinds of transformations and modifications in the hands of foreign visitors, Greek, Roman, Arab and others. It is now usually written "Cheul" or "Chaul" locally; but its medial letter being influenced by a nasal, its pronunciation differs considerably from what the spelling of the word by itself would suggest. Its local pronunciation at the present day is as nearly as possible "Tsemvul" or "Tsemval." Inscriptions found in connection with some famous Budhist caves, near Bombay, known as the Kanheri Caves, supposed to date A. D. 130, quote the name as "Chemula," and there seems almost overwhelming evidence to identify the place with the "Timulla" or "Simulla" of Ptolemy (A. D. 150), and the "Semulla" of the author of the "*Periplus Maris Erithræi*" (A. D. 247). Arabs sailor have since called it "Saimur" or "Jaimur;" and a Chinese traveller, Hwen Thsang, in A. D. 642, designates it "Tchi-Mo-Lo." A Russian traveller in 1470 (Athanasius Nikitin) calls it "Chivil." Peering down the vistas of the ancient past, Cheul can probably claim high antiquity under the older names Champávati and Revatikshetra, which would carry it back to Vedic times. The site of Old Cheul is a mile or two distant from the comparatively recent Portuguese town of Lower Cheul, or Revdanda, which in its location has followed the receding sea. This in its turn is now but a site of ruined churches and bastions. In the present village of Revdanda which stands close to the ruins of the latter, the Bene-Israel to-day possess a synagogue. Without venturing to pronounce positively on the question, it would not be wholly unreasonable to suppose that the arrival of the Bene-Israel may have been in some way connected with

the resort of their ancestors to this (probable) port for purposes of merchandize, which may have resulted ultimately in settlements and colonies, and finally in a permanent domicile, voluntary or involuntary, on the part of their descendants. We hope later on to discuss this latter question more fully.

THE INDIAN HOME OF THE BENE-ISRAEL.

Here, then, in the near neighbourhood of what was apparently an ancient and once celebrated emporium of foreign trade, is the spot which the Bene-Israel claim as the place of their earliest residence in Indian. Over a well-defined tract of country, north, east, and south of this locality—starting from a point parallel with the north of the island of Bombay, extending to a part of the coast some sixty miles south of it. and reaching eastwards some thirty miles up to the foot of the Sahyàdri Ghats —are found thickly dotted on the maps the villages from which the surnames of the present Bene-Israel are taken, thereby marking them as places of former fixed settlement with them. In the time of the Peshwa, and under the British rule also up to the year 1866, much of the southern portion of this region was comprised under a subdivision of territory known as Rajpuri, which in other words is the "Rajapur" mentioned in Buchanan's *Christian Researches*.* Since a survey made in 1866, this portion of the country has been redistributed, and now forms part of the Roha and Mangaon talukas (or sub-divisions) of the Collectorate (or district) of Kolaba. The Pen and

*Page 227 (XIth Ed.).

Panvel talukas of the same district, on the north, and the Mangaon taluka of the same, together with the Native State of Janjira, on the south, take in all the rest of the piece of country which we have spoken of above as forming the Indian home of the Bene-Israel. Throughout numerous villages of the same, scattered often but by twos and threes in a village, are still to be found a large number of Ben-Israelite families. In its country towns such as Alibag, Revdanda, Roha-Ashtami, Pen, and Panvel, the Bene-Israel tend, of course, to congregate in larger numbers. Almost in the extreme south of this tract of country, advantageously situated on the Janjira creek, was the seaport town of Rajpuri, from which one of the leading families of the Bene-Israel, the Rajpurkars, take their surnames. A prominent representative of this family, until his death in 1905, for many years adorned the city of of Bombay in the person of Mr. Joseph Ezekiel Rajpurkar, J. P., a gentleman, who from being once a pupil of the late Dr. John Wilson, rose by his learning, to distinction as a Fellow of the Bombay University, and by his many books published, to be an ornament to his community. The town of Rajpuri still exists, and is known as Danda-Rajpuri. It perhaps gave its name to the district of Rajpuri above-mentioned. Itself of old a place of importance, it stands but a mile or two removed from the much more famous seaport and fort of Janjira, which is thought by many to have been in former times the Zizerus, or Sigerdis of Strabo and Pliny, and if so was a favourite Indian port of Arab sailors to make for after leaving the Arabian coast at Suagros (Cape Fartaque).

The surnames of the Bene-Israel have been almost invariably formed by adding the syllable *kar* (pronounced to rhyme with "stir") to the names of the villages to which at one time their owners belonged, and signifying in effect, "resident of." Thus, the inhabitant of the town of Rajpuri became known as "Rajpurkar;" the resident of Pen as "Penkar;" the inhabitant of Apte as "Aptekar," and the like. These surnames are now no longer in process of formation, but are stereotyped; and so Bene-Israel are now constantly to be found resident in towns and villages to which their names bear no relation; and even from which, in consequence perhaps of their being comparatively modern places of resort with them, no Bene-Israelite names are derived. Thus there are now numerous Bene-Israel resident at Bombay, Panvel, Chirner, Poona, and Thana: but from none of these places is a Bene-Israelite surname derived. Into these places the Bene-Israel have brought with them the surnames which they have in bygone times obtained in the earlier villages of their sojourn: and thus a Penkar will be found in Bombay, an Aptekar in Panvel, and the like. The writer has been able with the greatest ease to draw up a list of over seventy surnames formed in the way described from various villages still known within the limits of the tract of country of which mention has been made, and is only withheld from reproducing them here, in the form of a footnote, by limitations of space. At the present moment the tendency amongst the progressive members of the Bene-Israelite community is to drop these surnames, perhaps because they are thought to constitute something of a social handicap amongst those who are anxious to avoid, in their

efforts to attain an equality (supposed to be lost) with their Jewish brethren elsewhere, any reminders of a quasi-indigenous Indian origin. The bare "Moses Abraham," or "David Elijah," and the like are now preferred to the older threefold arrangement which gave (in accordance with common Indian usage) first the name of the individual, next the name of the father, and thirdly the surname. The change is at any rate to be regretted in the interests of convenience. The confusion caused by it is very much that which might be expected to occur were Englishmen to drop their surnames, and each to content himself with adding to his own christian name, the Christian name of his father.

While on the subject of names, we had better treat of the other names besides surnames borne by the Bene-Israel. Now-a-days there is hardly any Scriptural name in use amongst Jews elsewhere which is not to be found amongst the Bene-Israel. But Dr. Wilson in his day thought it remarkable that the name Judah amongst men, and the favourite Jewish name Esther amongst women, were said, at the time he made his enquiries, not to be found: whereas, of all names amongst men, Reuben was said to be the most common. A curious circumstance is the way in which Biblical names have been adapted and changed to bring them into conformity with Indian styles of names. The following are examples, the Hebrew names of which they are modifications being given in parentheses:—Banaji (Benjamin), Musaji (Moses), Abaji (Abraham), Haronji (Aaron), Samaji (Samuel), Dawudji (David), Essaji (Isaac), Akoobji (Jacob), Essubji (Joseph), Elloji (Elijah), Hassaji (Hezkiel—Ezekiel), Ramaji (Rahamim), Reubenji (Reuben), Sullimanji (Solo-

mon), Shamshonji (Samson), Shallumji (Shallum). These Indianized Hebrew names are among the characteristics which are now being laid aside in increasing degrees by the Bene-Israel; but they are yet general amongst those in the villages at the present day. A number of purely Hindu names, not Israelite at all, although almost entirely unassociated, it is said, with those of Hindu deities, have been in vogue amongst both men and women of the Bene-Israel, but are now being laid aside. Such amongst men have been Bàlàji, Bàbàji, Banduji Dàdàji, Sakuji, Nathuji, Ittuji,* and a number of others; and amongst women, Làdubai, Akabai, Baiabai, Nánubai, Thakubai, Zaitubai, Balkubai, Sonabai, and numerous others. The termination "Bai" it must be explained, is one of respect, corresponding somewhat to our "Mrs." or "Miss"; and this affix is added also when the names are Scriptural ones, *e. g.*, Sipporahbai, Dinahbai, Segullahbai, Yochebedbai, Simhahbai, Shebabai, Ruthbai, Hannahbai, Miriambai, and the like.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE BENE-ISRAEL.

During long centuries of practical isolation from others of their race, it is not surprising that the Bene-Israel should have lapsed into not only great forgetfulness of the customs of their people, but also into religious ignorance generally. Even Hebrew has been forgotten by them, with the exception of one principal formula. Still the darkness of their solitary habitation during the ages does not seem to have been wholly unbroken. Now and then,

* Many of these words signify relationships, as "brother," "child," "grandson," &c.

according to their traditions—the latter borne out by other indications also—it was interrupted by the fitful gleam of the arrival of some teacher from among their brethren of other regions. By the instrumentality of such, certain later observances of Judaism seem to have been superinduced upon what were not unlikely much older Hebrew rites. In spite, however, of such occasional religious revivals amongst them, the Bene-Israel when first brought under the notice of modern Christian observers, a century more or less ago, had reached a state which but for a few clear and unmistakable evidences of their Israelite origin, might have made it difficult to identify them as members of the ancient nation at all. Fortunately, however, up to the time that they emerged out of their long seclusion into the notice of observers of the present day, they had retained certain very characteristic tokens of their ancestry and faith. For one thing, they had continued to practice circumcision. This would not in itself, except for its practice in infancy, have differentiated them from Mahomadans. But they had also retained Saturday as their weekly day of solemn observance, gaining for themselves, as we have seen,* amongst their neighbours the appellation of "Saturday oilmen" thereby. Again, although no scrolls of the law in Hebrew, nor books of religion of any kind had survived among them, yet they had retained in memory the *Shema Yisrael, i. e.*, the great Jewish formula, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;" and for the lack of any other religious form of service, they were wont to use this formula, often repeated many times over, on nearly every conceivable re-

* See Page 2.

ligious occasion, whether of fast, festival, birth, marriage or burial. Again, they had retained the distinguishing Israelite practice of wearing the side-locks of the hair of their head long, in supposed allusion to Levit. xix. 27; indeed from their custom, in common with Mahomadans and others in India of shaving their head, the retention of these "peahs," or love-locks, in front of the ears is wont to give the observance of the supposed precept a peculiarly exaggerated appearance. Once more, the fact that those visitors who occasionally appeared amongst the Bene-Israel from other Israelite communities seem to have found no difficulty in recognising the claims of the Bene-Israel to be of true Israelite origin to be well founded,* —the fact that Buchanan in his records of conversations with the (so-called) "Black" Jews of Cochin in 1808 found them cognizant of a section of their race who they said had migrated among other places to Rajapur (*i.e.*, as said above, to the tract of country till lately known as Rajpuri, in the Bombay Presidency), as well as Cochin,† —and the fact that the Bene-Israel themselves have handed down one consistent tradition of themselves as to their Hebrew descent,—all helps to put doubt as to their origin at rest. Moreover, in the matter of the distinction of meats, Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar points out that although oblivious to all the finer and more intricate practices of the Talmudic Jews of to-day in connection

* "Although David Rahabi was convinced that the Bene-Israel were the real descendants of the Jews, he wished to examine them further. He therefore gave their women clean and unclean fish to be cooked together, but they singled out the clean from unclean ones, saying they never used fish that had neither fins nor scales."—Mr. H. S. Kehimkar's *Sketch*, page 20.

† *Christian Researches*, page 227 (Eleventh Edition).

with the separation of clean and unclean, the Bene-Israel had a rough and ready way of dealing with the matter for themselves. They solved the question of which animals exactly were permissible for food, and which were prohibited, by confining themselves to fowls, sheep and goats, removing only the prescribed sinew in the leg (Gen. xxxii 32), or otherwise abstaining from eating the hindquarters of the animal altogether. They would not kill maimed or defective animals, nor eat those which had died of themselves or which had been strangled or torn by beasts of prey. They abstained from blood and fat. In regard to fish they would only eat those which had both fins and scales. It is said that *suar-khau*, or "swine-eater", is still their grossest epithet of abuse. The above considerations, apart from such other evidences as complexion, contour of countenance, &c., to which we may perhaps refer later, will be deemed sufficient, we think, to establish the right of the Bene-Israel to claim a true Israelite origin and descent.

CERTAIN RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES IN VOGUE AMONGST THE BENE-ISRAEL NOT IN COMMON USE AMONGST JEWS ELSEWHERE.

Use of Frankincense.

Until within the last three-quarters of a century the Bene-Israel were accustomed to burn Frankincense on a number of ceremonial occasions. It has been discontinued by them out of deference to the representations of modern Jews from Cochin and elsewhere, who have been among them of late years, and who have condemned it as a non-Jewish prac-

tice, not to say an idolatrous one. Incense has, of course, never been employed by the Jews at large since the destruction of the Second Temple. Its use is unknown to Talmudic Jews. It is, however, not without significance that amongst the ancient Jews of China, now represented by the remnant surviving at K'ai-Fung-Fu, whose tradition is that their entry into China was by way of the west (viâ India?), there is evidence that frankincense was in plentiful use for purposes of worship. Provision was made for burning it in their synagogue at K'ai-Fung-Fu in a large brazen vase; and there is record, even, of incense for use in the said synagogue being presented by the Emperor (see *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Art. "China"). The statement sometimes made with regard to the Bene-Israel, to the effect that their use of frankincense was one of the customs borrowed by them from the Hindus, seems open to considerable doubt. The Hindus do indeed employ incense in connection with their offerings to idols, often in conjunction with camphor; but they are said ordinarily to use the more common incense of the country called *dhup* (a word of Sanscritic origin), whereas the Bene-Israel, like the Mahomadans also, use the true incense (resin of *Boswellia serrata*), known in India as *lobhàn* (Arabic, *luban*; Hebrew, *lebonah*; Sanscrit, *srivàsà*;) or as *ud* (also an Arabic word).* Whether we have in this ceremonial use of incense by the Bene-Israel a vestige of older usages than those now prevailing amongst Talmudic Jews—in fact, a survival, as Mr. Haim Kehimkar would urge, of religious customs dating from Mishnaic times;—or whether the practice, both in India and in China, is to be held to be

[* Further investigation leads me to modify what I had written here. Hindus also will use the foreign incense in conjunction with that locally produced; witness the use of *udbattis*, or pastiles made of *ud*. They mix *ud* also ordinarily, it is said, with *dhup*.]

one derived from the contamination of surrounding idolatry, is a question which we must ask our kind readers themselves to decide, if they are able.

The Nazarite Vow.

Although growing yearly more uncommon, the sight of a Ben-Israelite lad with long hair tressed up at the back of his head, after the manner of a woman's, is a sight which still occasionally meets the eye. Such a lad has been the subject of a vow; and until the vow has been paid, a razor will not be permitted to pass over his head. When the day arrives on which the lad's parents feel able to redeem the vow, the hair will be shaved off, put into the balances, and be weighed against silver or gold, according to the nature of the vow (some say that the hair ought to be soaked in water first, to increase its weight), and the money so forthcoming, which it was the custom once to expend in charity, will be given to the synagogue funds. Have we here, or have we not, an example of the survival of a Palestinian custom dating back behind Talmudic Judaism? The shaved off hair is thrown into the sea, or into some river or tank, and is not burned as prescribed in Number vi. 18. This is in close analogy with much else that is religious in India, where the culmination of religious performance continually consists in precipitating something into the water. It probably is traceable to Hindu reverence for the Ganges, which is commonly supposed to reappear in many rivers, tanks, &c.* The practice seems to have infected other religions than the Hindu. Indian Mahomadans (of the Sunni majority) on their Tabut day of the Mohurram festival wind up by a procession to the waterside to immerse

* Some dispute this. I merely offer the suggestion.

their representations of the tombs of Hassan and Husain, or at least of some portions of them (the part for the whole); Hindus have a similar procession to immerse the earthen images of their god Ganpati at the close of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival; and cast the ashes of their cremated dead into some river or tank, &c. And the Bene-Israel would seem perhaps not to have been behind the ways of the country in this their substitute for burning the hair of the Nazarite.*

* Mr. Halm S. Kehimkar describes the vows of the Bene-Israel as follows:—"Vows were generally made by women, but where either fulfilled by their parents or husbands. A vow was sometimes made by a woman who had no male issue. In the event of her getting a son she generally kept him *Nazir*. *i.* e., there would be no razor upon his head for six or seven years. After the child became six or seven years old, he was led in procession, and brought home again, when his head was shaved and weighed against gold or silver (according to the vow made by the woman), which was given in charity, but now is given to the synagogue. The shaved hair was thrown into the sea and not burnt, as stated, Numbers vi. 18. A feast was given in the evening in the following manner:—After the invited party came in, a clean white towel or clean white sheet was spread on the floor, whereon a dish containing *Malida*, five pieces of unleavened bread made of rice-flour besmeared with sweets, twigs of *Subja*, and five pieces of cooked liver of a goat, was placed. Another dish containing cakes of wheaten flour fried in oil, and wafers of unleavened bread also fried in oil, and livers and gizzards of as many fowls as may have been killed on the occasion, was also placed there. The dish also contained a glass of wine, or other liquor, as a drink offering, and several other plates filled with all sorts of fruits were kept upon the sheet, over which they said *Kiriyath Shema* about a dozen times. Nowadays *Vayitenlekha*, *i.* e., the verses of blessing said after Habdalla, are repeated. After the ceremony was over, a handful of *Malida*, together with a twig of *Subja* and a piece of each of the articles kept in the dish and in the plates, were taken by the man who officiated as priest in his own hands, and before presenting these to the lady who had made the vow he asked her what had caused her to make the vow. On her giving the reason, she was told that she was free from her vow, and the *Malida* was given to her. The articles in the dish and plates were distributed among the party, except the pieces of liver and gizzard, as well as the five pieces of cakes and wafers, which were kept by the officiating priest for himself, while the guests were served with the feast. This reminds us of the Nazarite offering mentioned in Numb. vi. 14, except that the Bene-

Use made of Subja, Malida, Goat's Liver, &c.

How far the Bene-Israel have been imitators of the Indian Mahomadans; how far Mahomadan practices in India and elsewhere owe their origin to the familiarity of Mahomad with Jewish customs and his borrowings from them; how far both Mahomadan and Ben-Israelite religious practices have been influenced and modified in India by the prevailing Hinduism around them; and how far the present characteristic observances of the Bene-Israel date back in their origin behind both Mahomadanism and Talmudic Judaism, are all open questions, and we must for the most part leave our readers to form their own conclusions regarding them. We can but ourselves describe things as they meet our eye.

Subja is a fragrant herb, somewhat resembling mint, used in a variety of ways for different religious purposes by the Bene-Israel. Likewise, it is so used by the Indian Mahomadans. Its botanical name is *Ocymum pilosum vel basilicum*. It is allied in genus to the *Tulsi*, or sacred plant of the Hindus ("holy basil"—*Ocymum sanctum*), of which it is a larger variety. In its frequency and variety of use amongst the Bene-Israel it reminds us of the place occupied by the *hyssop* in the Israelite offerings of the Mosaic law. This latter much-debated herb (the hyssop), though by many now believed to be identical with the caper, was by older authorities believed to have been a mint or a marjoram, a

---

Israel did not sacrifice a lamb, goat or fowl as a burnt-offering, which they said could not be done without their own dominion. All the things that were prepared on the occasion were eaten on that day and the day following and nothing was left for the third, as mentioned in Lev. vii. 16, 17. Vows were also made for the recovery of persons who were ill, or for getting out of difficulties, and were fulfilled in a similar manner."—*Sketch*. Pages 11, 12.

fragrant herb to which the *Subja* would most strictly correspond. Some have suggested to the writer that the *Subja* may have to do with the use more recently made by the Jews of the myrtle (Nehem. viii. 15.) The Jews have a form of blessing upon *b'samim* "sweet scents," *isbhe b'samim*, sweet herbs," &c. The Ben-Israelite use of *Subja*, however, seems to point to something more distinctly used in offerings, like the hyssop of old, rather than to anything so occasionally used as the myrtle (as *e. g.*, at the Feast of Tabernacles amongst Jews now).

Malida, is a cake (in the case of the Bene-Israel, usually a rice-bread) made up with milk, molasses, butter, &c. The word is Persian. It especially describes in India the above confection as offered at the shrine of a Mahomadan *Pir* (or saint). Figuratively it is used of anything much crushed or squeezed, and to make *Malida* of an opponent may mean to pommel him into a mummy (*Molesworth*). *Malida* holds a conspicuous place in the old Ben-Israelite ceremonies, as they now come to light. Whether we have in it a vestige of the ancient Mosaic meat offerings is only a thought which we suggest to the consideration of our readers.

Goat's liver and the *gizzards of fowls*, brought and offered after being cooked, to the officiant, form another prominent element in the religious rites of the Bene-Israel. It must be remembered that little, if any, other flesh than that of goats* and fowls is partaken of by the Bene-Israel.

Beef they have abstained from, doubtless out of deference to the state of Hindu feeling around them. We may remember

* Goats may be taken to include sheep, which, however, are not so common as the former.

that in accordance with Exod. xxix. 13, 22, and Lev. iii. 4, 10, 15, "the caul that is *upon* the liver" was one of the parts of the animal peculiarl dedicated to God. The LXX. curiously renders ὁ λοβός τοῦ ἥπατος, for "caul upon the liver," as though they believed an actual part of the liver to be offered. It is, perhaps, more probable that the rite has some entirely different derivation, being possibly, as we have hinted in the case of the *Malida*, an adaptation of the law of the meat-offering, the parts offered being, perhaps, considered choice, and representing, perhaps, also, a proportion of the animal slain within the power of the offerer to give, and adequate to the occasion. The writer has been unable to trace any practice analogous to the above amongst either Hindus or Mahomadans, so that it is difficult to see whence it could have been borrowed.*

The Cup of Blessing.

The revival of Synagogues and synagogue-worship amongst the Bene-Israel is a thing of less than a century and a half old. The Jewish Liturgy which they use is that of the Sephardim, and those perhaps are right who suppose that when the Bene-Israel re-inaugurated their synagogue services they adopted for use books which were current at the time amongst the Jews of Cochin.† A common form of prayer-book which they use in the Synagogue is one published at Leghorn, and entitled "Prayers for the Month" (*T'philoth*

* Some would suggest that these last practices have grown out of a desire on the part of the officiants to benefit themselves at the time of such offerings, the portions received by the officiant being a sort of perquisite levied on the offerer. Even so it would be but a substitute for that enjoined in Numb. vi. 20.

† Dr. Wilson believes that they received their Hebrew Liturgy from the Jews of Arabia. See *Lands of the Bible*, Vol. II. page 670.

Hahodesh). One or two practices which are in vogue amongst the Bene-Israel in their Synagogues seem to call for somewhat special notice. One of them is (to adopt the nomenclature of Dr. Wilson †) the "Cup of blessing"; the other is the "Kiss of peace."

The "Cup of Blessing" is, perhaps, but a performance of the Habdalah enacted in the Synagogue, with the addition that all present partake of the contents of the cup. Our readers perhaps will hardly require to be told that the Habdalah is the name of a ceremony whereby a separation is placed between times that are sacred, and those that are ordinary—between, *e.g.*, a Sabbath and week-day, or between a festival and an ordinary day. The word *Habdalah* itself means "separation" or "distinction." It is performed both in the Synagogue and in the home. It was perhaps realized among the Bene-Israel that the number of literate persons being few amongst them, this ceremony would not be adequately performed unless done in the Synagogue only. The ceremony, as it meets the eye of the onlooker, is conducted as follows:—A cup of wine (usually only juice expressed from raisins for the purpose) is put into the hands of the *Chazan* or reader. He pronounces a blessing over it and partakes of it. Some of the wine thus blessed is poured into a large vessel full of similar wine, of which the congregation at large is now to partake. The Sexton (*Shamash*) with his attendant now passes with the large vessel round the Synagogue, and, using two little silver cups, one of which he fills while the other is being emptied, gives to each worshipper his portion. Whether any other explanation can

† *Lands of the Bible* Vol. II. pp. 672 and 674.

be given of this ceremony than its being a modification of *Habdalah*, we will ask our intelligent readers to consider.

The Kiss of Peace.

This custom is more difficult than the former to connect with any generally prevailing practice of the Jews elsewhere. Yet it is evidently so much one with the kiss of peace known amongst the early Christians, that one cannot but suppose that there is some community of origin between the two, could it be exactly traced. It is, of course, not difficult to believe in the possibility of the practice having been handed down amongst the Bene-Israel, and having been without break used by them on occasions of their meeting together at circumcisions, and for such other communal meetings as they may have kept up amongst themselves from the first. It is performed as follows:—Emanating from the chief minister, who bestows it on the elders nearest to him, it passes throughout the congregation. Each individual seeks it as far as possible from his senior or superior. Extending the arms with the hands flattened out, and in the position of the thumbs being uppermost, the person approached takes the hand between both of his own, similarly held, and the junior then probably places his remaining hand on the outside of one of those of the person already holding his other hand. The hands of each are then simultaneously released and each one immediately passes the tips of his fingers which have touched those of his neighbour to his month, and kisses them. He then passes on to receive the same from, or to bestow the same on, another; and so on, till all in the Synagogue have saluted one another. Two or three minutes may be occupied in the process. A movement is going on all

through the Synagogue, and a distinctly audible sound of the lips is heard through the building, till all is finished.

This custom prevails amongst the Jews of Cochin as well as amongst the Bene-Israel of Bombay. As regards Christians, the practice is not as yet extinct. The Syrian Christians in Malabar regularly use it and it may be a further evidence of the intimate connection which we shall endeavour to show as likely to have existed between the Jews of India and Persia, especially those formerly of Kurdistan, that amongst the Nestorian Christians of Kurdistan, the practice is in vogue to-day also. The clergy of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians describe the kiss of peace as prevailing *(mutatis mutandis)* almost exactly as amongst the Bene-Israel.* The Rev. T. Whitehouse, in a paper contributed to *Evening Hours* in 1873, describes the custom as practised in the White Jews' Synagogue in Cochin and amongst the Syrian Christians of S. Thomas there.

BEN-ISRAELITE MODES OF OBSERVING HEBREW FASTS AND FESTIVALS.

The interesting subject upon which we now enter forms an additional evidence of the right which we have before insisted upon of the Bene-Israel to be considered a true branch of the Hebrew race; for we find them, after a lapse of long periods

* Witness the following from Messrs. Maclean and Browne's book, *The Catholicos of the East and His People* (published by the S.P.C.K.), page 255:—"One [deacon] goes to the Bema and says a litany; another gives the kiss of peace to the people, somewhat as at the daily services except that the celebrant first kisses the altar and the deacon takes his hand between his own and kisses them, and then goes to the sanctuary door and gives the peace to the person of highest rank, and then to the next and so on.

of isolation, observers, in a way peculiarly their own, of the time-honoured fasts and festivals of their people. Certain omissions there are of holidays observed by modern Jews, and certain deviations occur from what would now be considered the correct method of their observance; sometimes, moreover, count seems to have been lost of the right dates for keeping them; but here, nevertheless on the whole, the well-known fasts and festivals are. It is not impossible that some of the discrepancies and omissions noticeable may be indicative of the great antiquity of the separation of the ancestors of the Bene-Israel from the main body of their people. Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar holds that many of the present observances of the Bene-Israel conform rather to a Mishnaic standard than to those of the times of the more developed Rabbinical Judaism.*

We must premise at the outset, too, that there appear to have been occasionally, during the long history of the Bene-Israel in India, times of new departure in religious observances. There have been periods, so it would seem, when, consequent upon the advent amongst them, from their people elsewhere, of teachers of their religion, certain ritual practices of later Judaism have been superinduced upon those older ones formerly known to the Bene-Israel alone. Mr. Haim thinks that it is even possible to trace in the very names by which these fasts and festivals are known amongst the Bene-Israel, the distinction between the newer and the older ones. For

* "We must observe that these rites and ceremonies, and the manners and customs of the Bene-Israel before the present religious revival, which commenced from the time of David Rahabi . . . . seem to have a very close analogy with those practised by the Jews in Mishnaic times."—*Sketch.* Page 4.

"Those who are not acquainted with the manners and customs of the Mishnaic times would, however, accuse the Bene-Israel of practising heathen customs."—*Sketch.* Page 10.

whereas, as he points out, the festivals of greater antiquity are known to the Bene-Israel under names derived from the Marathi language (the one universally spoken by the Bene-Israel as dwellers in the Maratha country), those of later institution appear under Hindustani names. The traditions of the Bene-Israel narrate that a notable Jewish visitor and teacher amongst them in mediæval times was one David Rahabi, who, it is said, effected a considerable religious revolution amongst them. They hold that he came some 900 years ago, but it may be reasonably doubted if his visit belongs to quite such ancient history as that. The surname "Rahabi" might bespeak for its owner an Egyptian origin (Is. li. 9; Ps. lxxxvii. 4), and is a surname amongst the Jews of Cochin at the present day. As the Bene-Israel knew no Hebrew the communications of such a one with them, if, for example, from Cochin, may have been expected to have been in Hindustani, and hence a not improbable reason for the names of the later festivals being in the Hindustani dialect; but if so, we have a further reason for denying to the visit of David Rahabi such an early date as 900 years ago, since Hindustani was hardly in use as a spoken language till about A.D. 1400.*

Following Mr. H. S. Kehimkar's classification, we will first take note of those religious fasts and festivals possessing Marathi names, and all characterized by the Marathi designation *san* (pronounced to rhyme with "turn"), which denotes alike a religious season, whether of fast or festival. It will be noticed that the names of the festivals are often taken from the domestic usages connected with their observance, and in one case from the fact of the festival synchronizing with a well-known Hindu one.

* Prof. Monier William's *Modern India* (Trübner & Co.) Page 154.

1. *Navyáchá* San, i.e.*, "Feast of the New [Year]." In connection with this feast, only one day is observed by the Bene-Israel, and not two, as with modern Jews. Herein they adhere the more closely to Num. xxix. I.

2. *Khiríchá San, i.e.*, "Feast of [partaking of] *Khír*." The domestic speciality connected with this feast is the partaking of a confection made of grains of new rice compounded with sugar, scraped cocoanut, and spices, known as *Khír*.† This is an example of a feast of which the date of the observance has become doubtful. It is apparently intended to correspond with the Feast of Tabernacles, but the time at which it has been used to be kept by the Bene-Israel differs from the true date of the latter by a fortnight. Mr. Haim supposes that the error may have arisen from the difficulty of keeping up in a strange land the publicity of a feast like Tabernacles, which called for the building of booths; and that to the failure of outward observance may have succeeded an error as to its right date of occurrence.

3. *Dárfálníchá San.*‡ "Fast of Door-closing." This fast

* Note that the syllable "cha" in this and similar words is pronounced "tsa." An accented "a" means that it is pronounced long, like "a" in "rather." An unaccented "a" is pronounced, as shown already, like the "u" in "turn." An accented "i" means that it is pronounce like "ee" in "heed."

† "On this day they prepared *Khír* (a sort of pudding made of new corn mixed with cocoanut juice and some sweets). A dish full of this pudding with a twig of *Subja* (*Ocymum pilosum vel basilicum*) was placed on a white sheet. A censer with frankincense burning therein was also placed near the dish. *Kiriyath Shema* was then repeated. This being done, the pudding was shared by the family. None would eat it before the *Kiriyath Shema* was repeated, and this is still observed by the Beni-Israel."—Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar's *Sketch of the History of Beni-Israel.*

‡ N.B.—*San*, as mentioned above, serves to indicate fast as well as festival, according to context, meaning simply, as we should say, "holiday."

corresponds to the great Jewish fast of the Day of Atonement. The Bene-Israel were wont on this day to rigidly shut themselves up in their houses, to fast, wear white clothing, avoid contact and even conversation with those of other castes and religions, and believed that on this day their sins were forgiven them.*

4. *Holichá San.* "Feast of Holi [time]." The Holi is a Hindu festival of very popular, but, unhappily, of grievously debased and riotous character.† Its time synchronized with the Jewish feast of Purim, which amongst the Bene-Israel

---

* "On the day previous to this fast they bathed in hot water and then in cold, dined at nine or ten in the morning, supped at about five in the evening, and fasted until the evening of the next day up to seven. They did not stir out of doors, which they kept locked throughout the day. They did not touch the people of other denominations, nor did they exchange words with them, from the time they took a bath till the next evening. They dressed themselves in white, as they thought that it was more than a Sabbath, and that God forgave their sins on that day. The next day they gave alms to the poor, and called it *Shila San*, *i.e.*, a stale holiday, which is, of course, *Simhat Cohen*. On this day they visited their relatives and friends, in token of the preservation of their lives in spite of their sins. There was one peculiar notion among the Bene-Israel with regard to this holiday; it was that the souls of the departed visited their habitations on the day of *Ereb Kippur*, *i.e.* the day previous to Atonement, and left on the morning of the *Simhat Cohen*; but whether this notion was an original one, or of a latter teaching cannot now be ascertained. (Numb. xxix., 7)."—Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar's *Sketch*.

Mr. Haim suggests that the name "Door-closing" may have some association with one of the "Additional Prayers" of the Day of Atonement in the modern Jewish Prayer-book, called "Neyela," or the "Closing of the Doors," from which the Bene-Israel may have adopted the name. We would ourselves suggest that if there be something in the theory it may rather be that the Ben-Israelite name of the day may point back to some early custom of which the prayer in the modern Jewish office may be itself of the nature of a commemoration.

† "The 13th Adar was kept as a fast, and the 14th was regarded as a feast. They called it *Holicha San* as it always fell during the Hindu holidays. On the 14th they sent presents of sweetmeats made at home to one another."—Mr. H. S. Kehimkar's *Sketch*. Page 7.

received in consequence this apparently heathen name. But the import of the Feast of Purim was forgotten by them, and, as in the case of the New Year's Festival, the Bene-Israel do not observe the second day of the Festival, as modern Jews are wont to do.

5. Anási Dánkáchá San. "Feastival of Jar-closing." This festival corresponds to the great one of the Passover. The bread used by the Bene-Israel, made from rice-flour, is at all times an unleavened bread, and so the question of leaven does not arise in connection with it. *Anás* is the name of an earthen chatty or jar, used to contain a sour mixture used as a sauce, and possibly the only article about a Ben-Israelite house to which the suspicion of fermentation or leaven could attach. The Bene-Israel signalized this festival by the ceremony of covering up and setting aside the *anási*-jar, which after eight days was again opened and used. The memory of the deliverance from Egypt as the true reason of this festival has faded from their minds.

6. Biradyáchá San. "Fast of [partaking of] *Biradyá.*" This fast corresponded to that for the destruction of the first Temple, kept on the 9th Ab. It was characterized among the Bene-Israel by the fast being broken at the end of the day by partaking of a curry made of a kind of pulse named *biradyá.* For eight days previous to this fast the Bene-Israel were wont to partake only of a vegetable diet, and on the evening preceding the fast the food was served out on plantain leaves.*

Among the feasts of older observance should have been one corresponding to the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. But

* "To symbolize that the Israelites had no household utensils to partake of their food from, at the time of the loss of their dominion and power."—Mr. H. S. Kehimkar's *Sketch.* Page 7.

neither amongst these earlier feasts, nor amongst those presumably introduced later on by David Rahabi, is there any trace of such a festival amongst the Bene-Israel. Perhaps the special purpose of this festival was one liable to make its observance out of Palestine readily drop into disuse.*

We come now to those later holidays in observance amongst the Bene-Israel, which, instead of being characterized by the Marathi word *San*, which is of Sanscritic origin, bear the Hindustani titles of "*Rojá*" (of Persian origin), "*Oorus*" (of Arabic origin), and the like.

1. Ramzán. In its common signification this title is the well-known one which designates the month of strict fast (from sunrise to sunset) kept annually by the Mahomadans. It must, therefore, have been borrowed by the Bene-Israel in days subsequent to the rise of Mahomadanism. It is used by the former to express their observance, in the Hebrew month Ellul, of the days of expiation, when it is customary, according to the Sephardi rité, to recite certain penitential prayers called Selichoth, and, in the case of many persons, to practice fastings during some five weeks preceding the Day of Atonement.† The name does not, of course, imply that the days coincide in date with those of the Mahomadan Ramzan, which it is needless

* Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar would account for its loss as follows:—"*The Feast of Pentecost, which falls on the fiftieth day after Passover*, was forgotten by the Bene-Israel owing to the absence of synagogues and to the want of any peculiarity of the day. *Hadima*, i.e. keeping up at night and reading the Bible was a peculiarity of the day; but they neither had the Bible, nor could they read Hebrew; consequently they could not remember it."—*Sketch*. Page 9.

† See Leo Modena of Venice, *History of the Rites, Customs and Manner of Life of the Present Jews throughout the World*. English translation. London 1650. P. 139.

to say, they could not do; but only that the two correspond in character.

2 *Navyáchá Rojá.* "Fast of the New [Year]." So-called because it occurred but a day or two after the New Year's Festival. It appears to correspond with the Fast of Gedaliah, observed by Jews on the 3rd of Tishri. (II Kings xxv. 25; Jer. xli. 2.)

3. *Sabábi Rojá.* In date this fast corresponds with the Fast of Tebeth, kept by Jews on the 10th of the month Tebeth, in commemoration of the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar "II Kings xxv. 1; Zech. viii. 19). But the meaning of the title remains a problem. If the derivation of the word *Sabábi* be Hindustani, it should mean "meritorious." We shall see directly that another fast observed by the Bene-Israel, occurring on another date, is known by the same title. Perhaps it may be permitted us to believe that the name relates to a time when the observance of this fast was introduced at a late date, and was super-added to older ones; and not being of established usage its observance was represented as an act of special piety or merit.

4. *Elijah Hannabichá Oorus* "Fair of Elijah the Prophet." This is an extraordinary festival, and points back to times of marked religious decadence amongst the Bene-Israel in India, and to the reign of unauthenticated legend among them fit to rank beside their tradition of the survival of the seven couples from shipwreck, and of the descent of the present Bene-Israel from them. Hindus and Mahomadans alike have their well-known religious fairs, or occasions and places of pilgrimage, the resort to which affords an opportunity for the combination of religion with enjoyment. Amongst Hindus these fairs are

generally known as *Melás*, and amongst Mahomadans as *Oorus*. The Bene-Israel, who in all matters tend to approximate more to Mahomadans than to Hindus, have adopted the term *Oorus*; and, not to be behind others, have developed their own place of local pilgrimage, importing into the matter reminiscences from the Bible of their own great Prophet Elijah. The place of resort for this purpose is a village in the Konkan, named Khandalla (to be distinguished from a well-known sanatorium of that name, situated at no great distance on the Ghats). Here they averred that Elijah had once appeared to them, and had on the same day ascended thence to heaven. In the hands of David Rahabi the festival was, perhaps, the Hebrew festival *Rosh Hashana L'elanoth*," or "The New Year for Trees," kept on the 7th of Shebat (Lev. xix 23-25), with which it corresponds in date.*

5. *Sababi Rojá.* This is a second fast of the same name and distinct from that described (No. 3) above. We have already commented on the possible signification of the name, It corresponds in date to the Fast of the 17th of Tammuz, kept in remembrance of the making of the breach in the wall of Jerusalem.

From our review of the above, we repeat that the fasts and festivals observed by the Bene-Israel, and handed down by

* "On this day all the Bene-Israel brought various kinds of fruits and placed them in plates, together with *Malida*, made of bread of rice-flour besmeared with sweets, and kept them on a while sheet. They also placed a twig of *Subja* and a censer with frankincense burning therein, They invited Elijah the prophet, and said the *Vayitten-lekha*, i. e. the verses of blessing said after *Habdalla*, and offered praises in gratitude to the Almighty who so graciously regulates everything to go out in its proper season for man's use and benefit. This being done the contents of the plates were shared by the family. This day is still observed". —Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar's *Sketch*. Page 7.

them during long periods of time, show a remarkable likeness, and a remarkable correspondence also in dates, with those of the Jews elsewhere. The differences between the Jewish and Indian calculations of months are but slight. Both are lunar, and the variation between the two is but one of twelve hours only. The Jewish *Rosh Hahodesh*, or 1st of the month, commences the day after the Indian New Moon. It was easy, therefore, for the Bene-Israel to keep accurate renderings (on the whole) of their religious times and seasons.†

II.

HOW THE BENE-ISRAEL AND OTHER EARLY JEWISH IMMIGRANTS MAY HAVE COME TO INDIA.

LEAVING now for the moment our enquiries into the habits and customs and past history of the Bene-Israel, and other Indian Jews, let us investigate the avenues of approach by which this interesting people may have been supposed to reach India, and China beyond.

When we seek to account for the presence of Israelites on Indian soil, we have to ponder a variety of circumstances. We have to ascertain, if we can, the ports and centres of trade which anciently existed, at various periods of history, both on Indian shores and in other places in maritime touch with them. We have to enquire what inducements to foreign merchants to come from afar to visit these places are known to have existed, and what facilities there were for the

† Mr. Haim Samuel Kehimkar's *Sketch*. Page 4.

passage of such to and fro. In the case of Israelites, we have to consider at what periods of their history they are likely, or are known, to have spread abroad into other countries, whether in quest of trade or under compulsion of political stress and difficulty; also, what communities or colonies of them exist similarly in other localities out of Palestine in the direction of India, or beyond India; and whether we can gather any information as to the antiquity of such.

VARIOUS THEORIES ON THE SUBJECT.

First of all, let us summarize certain varying views which have been held by different authorities as to the origin of the Bene-Israel in India, with the aim of obtaining as clear a statement as possible of the bearings of the problem before us :—

1. In the opinion of the late Dr. John Wilson, the Bene-Israel are an offshoot of the large and well-known community of the Yemenite Jews located in Arabia Felix, between whom and the Arabs of the country Dr. Wilson believes that intermixture at some time or other took place by marriage.* Milman seems not to question that the Jews of Yemen were Jews by descent, but others (as the Rev. J. E. Hanauer, of Palestine,† and the writer in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* who argues that colonies of actual Jews did not migrate into Arabia south of Medinah) hold that the Yemenite Jews were almost entirely, in their origin, Arabian converts to Judaism, dating their change of faith from about A.D. 300. Dr. Wilson considers that the Bene-Israel in their physiognomy resemble

* *The Bene-Israel of Bombay; An Appeal for their Christian Education.*

† See *The Jewish Intelligence* for February, 1903. Page 29.

the Arabian Jews.* He thinks that they may have probably come to India about the VIth century, and argues that this is a likely theory, because of the comparative proximity of the Yemenite community to India, and the intercourse maintained between Arabia and India from early times to the present day. The author of *Eben Saphir* is also of this view.

2. Mr. Haim Samuel Kehimkar controverts the above view. He urges that there are no signs of the sympathy and close touch which one would expect to find between the two communities had the one been the product of the other. On the contrary, he finds distinct indications of divergence and difference between the two in point of observances.† Certainly, although within comparatively easy reach, as mentioned by Dr. Wilson, of their brethren in India, the Yemenite Jews do not seem to have been instrumental in keeping up a knowledge of Hebrew, or of orthodox Jewish observance amongst the Bene-Israel. Mr. Haim believes that the Bene-Israel came direct from Palestine to India, and their wives with them; and that there has been no intermixture by marriage with Indian women, except in the cases of those known in their community as "Black" Israel, who are prac-

* "We are now disposed to believe that they came to India from Yemen or Arabia Felix, with the Jews or Israelites of which province —for they have both designations—they have from time immemorial had much intercourse, and whom they much resemble in their bodily structure and appearance."—*The Beni-Israel of Bombay; An Appeal.* See also *Lands of the Bible.* Vol 1. Page 668.

† "The Jews of Yemen do not observe any distinction between the black and white Israel, they do not practice any of the rites of marriage, burial and vows, nor do they make any offerings, like those made by the Bene-Israel, and in the absence of any sympathy on the part of the Jews of Yemen for the Bene-Israel we cannot believe that the ancestors of the Bene-Israel came from Yemen or Arabia Felix."—*Sketch of the History of Bene-Israel.* Page 14.

tically outcast in consequence. He would go further, and believes that the settled tradition existent amongst the Bene-Israel that their ancestors migrated out of "provinces to the north" *(uterekadil pradeshántún)* is to be held to show that they once had belonged to the important Jewish provinces which had sprung up previously to the Christian era in the Galilean northern parts of Palestine.* From thence, Mr. Haim thinks, about the time of the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes, 175 B. C., they must have passed through the ports of Elath or Ezion Geber, or through Egypt by the Gulf of Suez, and have voyaged thence to their Indian home.

3. The writer in the *Bombay Gazeteer*,† while ready to accept Dr. Wilson's theory of the Bene-Israel being a product of the community of Jews in Yemen in Arabia, also contemplates the possibility of their being descended from the Jews of Mesopotamia, and of their having sailed for India *vid* the Persian Gulf. There was, he remarks, in the sixth century of the Christain era, a close trading connection between India and the Persian Gulf; and it is said‡ that Jews bearing the surname of "Bene-Israel" were till recently to be found in Muscat.§ An attempt will be made further on in course

* See Wyse's *History of the Hebrews' Second Commonwealth*. Also Milman.

† A work published under the learned editorship of the Sir James M. Campbell, C.I.E., by the orders of Government. In the foot-notes and appendices of this laborious work will be found a whole galaxy of references to authorities for the ancient trade and navigation of Indian coasts. In a popular article like the present it has not been considered necessary to follow these to their sources, but the writer here acknowledges his great indebtedness to the work to which he has referred so largely.

‡ On the authority of Welsted's *Arabia*, 21.

§ Mr. Haim Samuel, instituting inquiries on the point, elicited the following information from Dr. A. S. Jayakar, at the time Civil Surgeon at Muscat:—"There are no Jews at present living here; but

of these articles to show the great likelihood of Jews having passed to India from the strong centres of Jewish life that once existed in parts above the head of the Persian Gulf.

4. It is perhaps well not wholly to exclude a theory that the Bene-Israel may have proceeded southwards from among the inhabitants of Afghanistan and Beluchistan. Mr. E. Solomon, in the *Jewish Chronicle* of Aug. 29th, 1902 (page 20), in an interesting letter dated from Larkhana in Sind, in which he makes much use of a work then recently published by a writer named Sheikh Sadikali, entitled *A Short Sketch of the Musalman Races found in Sind, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan*, notices that three of the dominant tribes, the Ansari, the Afghans or Pathans, and the Birahoi are all described by Sadikali as originally Jews, or Bene-Israel. Mr. Solomon mentions the many similarities in appearance and physiognomy between these people and the Bene-Israel of the Bombay Presidency which strike the ordinary observer. He instances "that lock of hair on the ears so common with Bagdadi and Indian Jews," which "can still be seen hanging and flying on the forehead and ears of the members of these

there are a few at Sohar, about 130 miles to the north, on the coast. They have mostly come from Bushire for trade; none are natives of Sohar. They are called Jews by the Arabs, although they call themselves Bene-Israel because they are the descendants of Yacoob (Jacob). They do not know from what tribe they are descendants. My informant, Ezra bin Suliman, belonging to the tribe of Levi, has originally come from Bushire, and has lived at Sohar for the last five years. He tells me that, excepting the members of the tribe to which he belongs, none in Bagdad, Busrah, or Bushire know the origin of their tribe. Their rites and ceremonies, however, are the same as those prescribed in the Torah (Pentateuch), and do not differ from those observed by Jews in Northern Arabia. No approximate date can be given of their immigration into the province. I am inclined to think they came from Persia and Northern Arabia. My informant is not aware of any tradition current among the Jews of Muscat about any dispersion of their tribe to countries like India."—*Sketch*. Pages 14, 15.

lost tribes." Again, "Their physiognomy is almost Jewish." When he informs them that he is an Israelite, especially a "Bene-Israel," he is greeted by them as one of themselves.*

The tradition of the hailing of the Bene-Israel "from northern parts" could of course have been used with peculiarly strict accuracy of their coming from or through Afghanistan and Beluchistan; with comparative accuracy of their coming from Mesopotamia or Persia; and of their coming from Arabia or the Red Sea only in the sense that in hugging the coasts in voyaging to India, if they did so, they would be arriving from the north. We candidly own that we cannot with our respected, and now venerable, author, Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar, believe that the reference in this tradition is to the northern provinces of Palestine.

* The following practices and customs which Mr. Solomon describes amongst these people certainly bear remarkable likeness to some of these of the Bene-Israel. He relates, "I was once told here by a friend that an Israelite going to Jacobabad was invited by a Mahomadan family to their house. He found that a dish containing cakes, goat's liver, and incense was prepared. He was shown a very old book, and asked if he knew how to read the portion pointed out. He found that it was a Hebrew book, and read the portion, which was the same used by Israelites in vow ceremonies, viz, *Eliyahu HaNabi* and *Vayittên-l'eha*. This Israelite entreated him much to give him the prayer-book, but the Mahomadan Sheikh would on no account part with it. On enquiry he found that there were only two families of this sort living at Jacobabad who yearly performed the ceremony. If they found none to read their prayers, as they called it, they simply prepared the dish, kept it on a clean white piece of cloth, burned the incense, and kissed the prayer-book, the only scripture book they had with them. When I myself went to Jacobabad, I found that these two families were lost to us. Although they followed, my friend told me, the Mahomadan faith, yet they did not intermarry with other Mahomadans, and hence when they found they were few in number, they always went to places where other families of their sect still settled. I tried my best to find out who these people were. Jacobabad once belonged to Beluchistan territory. They followed the oil-pressing profession like the Bene-Israel of old, but I am sure they were not descendants of Bene-Israel. They buried their dead east and west, in contradistinction to other Mahomadans, and followed the Mishnaic customs of sacrifices which the Bene-Israel exactly did."—*Jewish Chronicle*, Aug. 29th, 1902. Page 20.

OPPORTUNITIES OF TRAVEL OPEN TO ISRAELITES OF OLD.

Having set forth in brief the various theories which have been put forth on different sides as to the routes by which the Bene-Israel may have reached India, and postponing for the present any remarks of our own upon the subject, we next proceed to investigate what opportunities existed of old for the passage of such people as the Bene-Israel, if coming from Persia, Arabia, or *vid* the Red Sea, to the western shores of India, and what ancient ports were to be found to extend to them a welcome on arrival.

Opportunities of all sorts were at nearly all times plentiful, and date from the earliest times. It is probably little known to most how habitual from most ancient times, by one route or another, and to one port or another, has been the intercommunication, chiefly for purposes of trade and commerce, between Mesopotamia, Arabia, and the head of the Red Sea, parts more or less adjacent to Palestine, on the one hand, and between India, Ceylon, and even on to China, on the other. There is evidence that the Hindus of old were not influenced by the religious aversion which has so superstitiously bound them of later times, as to leaving their own shores for those of others; nor did they at such times regard as "*mlechch*" (barbarians or foreigners) those of other races.* There were

* "A trade-hating class rose to power in India, and in B. C. 300 got into Manu's code a rule making seafaring a crime. This clause is contrary to other provisions of the code, and to the respect with which merchants are spoken of in the Rigved and the Ramáyan, and in later time by the Buddhists." The Persians at one time (B. C. 538-330) "despised trade and seem to have blocked the mouths of the Tigris .....This Brahman and Persian hatred of trade, especially of trade by sea, perhaps explains the decay of foreign trade before the time of Alexander the Great (B. C. 325)."—*Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII, pt. 2, page 405, note, where see references to authorities.

interchanges of nationality on a considerable scale. Indians had settled in the island of Socotra, the name of which is probably itself Sanscrit (*Sukhatara, i. e.* the *Fortunate**), previously to the Grecian Empire. Indian Christians were to be found in Alexandria in the first century.† Ptolemy conversed with Indians in Alexandria,‡ and numerous Indian residents were to be found in Egypt in Pliny's time (A. D. 77.)§ After the fall of Palmyra (A. D. 273), Hindus graced the triumph of Aurelian.‖ Indian merchants (as witnessed by the Palmyrene inscriptions of the middle of the second century) had a safe pass through Parthia, a main line of their trade lying through Vologesocerta, a trade mart of consequence which grew up about A. D. 66, near the head of the Persian Gulf.¶ On the other hand, Yavans (Greeks) gave gifts to the Indian Buddhist caves at Kanheri, Nasik, Karli, and Junnar, all places in the Bombay Presidency.$ Some of these, and other great rock-temples near Bombay, both previously to and after the Christian era, bear unmistakeable impress of Parthian or Persian art or workmanship. The animal-ornamented capitals

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII., Part 2, page 714.

† Hough's *Christianity in India*, I., 44 (*Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI., page 138.)

‡ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI., pp. 137, 138, referring to (note) Ptolemy I., xviii. Bertius Ed., 17, and to Wilfrid in *Asiatic-Researches*, X., 101-105.

§ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI., page 138, note i.

‖ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII., Part ii., page 413, on the authority of Heeren, II, 446.

¶ "The details of this trade, perfumes, pearls, precious stones, cotton, rich silk, famous silks dyed with Indian purple, and embroidered with gold and precious stones, point to a close connection with India, and, through India, with China."—*Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII, Part ii., pp. 412, 413.

$ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI, page 139, note 7. Vol, XIII., Part ii, page 412, note 2.

of pillars in the caves of Karli, Bedsa and Nasik are said to closely resemble capitals at Persepolis and Susa, causing Fergusson to declare that either the early Buddhists of Western India must have belonged to the Persian Empire or must have drawn their Art from it.* From Greeks who had for many years traded to Simulla (or Timulla), which we have already spoken of as almost certainly identical with Cheul, near Bombay, Ptolemy (A.D. 135-150) had gained most of his information about Western India.† Various finds of Roman coins have taken place at Vellalore and at Coimbatore in the Madras Presidency, comprising issues of Augustus, Tiberius, Drusus Senior, Antonia, Caligula, Claudius, Nero and Agrippina, in one case of an earthen pot containing 522 *denarii*.‡ According to the Peutegenarian Tables, the Romans, as recently as A.D. 226, kept a force of two cohorts at Mouziris,§ on the

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII., Part ii., p. 413.

† *Bombay Gazeteer*. Vol. XI, p. 270 (quoting Ptol., Lib. I., cap, xvii). See also McCrindle's *Ancient India by Ptolemy*, p. 20.

‡ For the latter portion of this information I am indebted to the Rev. Theodore Dowling, Domestic Chaplain to the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, an experienced numismatologist, who had specimens of these coins.

§ Mouziris is to all intents and purposes identical with Cranganore, the historic home of the Jews of the Malabar Coast in the days of their prosperity. A perplexing number of names cluster around this ancient spot. Cranganore is the Portuguese form of the name of the Hindu town of Kodungalur, which still exists not far from the deserted site of Cranganore. This same locality was also known as Shingali; and in their earliest printed Hebrew Prayer-book, published at Amsterdam in A.D. 1668, the "Black" (so-called) Jews of Cochin style themselves "the several congregations of the assembly of Jeshuran [inhabiting] Shingali." Yule and Burnell (in *Hobson-Jobson*) consider that the word was probably formed from the latter portion of the name Tiruvan*jicolam*, which is that of a famous temple still ceremonially visited annually by the Rajah of Cochin, in order to pay homage to the ashes of his ancestors, the ancient Perumals of Malabar, deposited there. It is between Kodungalur and the old site of Cranganore. This Shingali may not unlikely be the Gin-

Malabar coast, to protect their trade there.*

SOPÁR, A FAMOUS NORTH-KONKAN PORT AND SACRED CITY OF OLD.

We proceed now to a yet more interesting point. Western India possesses on its coast about thirty-five miles north of Bombay a truly historic spot. It is now little more than rural in outward aspect, being a scene chiefly of fertile gardens; but it still bears the historic name which, subject to small variations, has been its own from remotest times. Sopárá, as it has now come to be called, is the Sopár, or Supárak (or Supárag) of Puranic and of even Vedic times. It was for a space of some three thousand years (from about B.C. 1500 to A.D. 1300) the capital of the Indian Konkan.† It is celebrated in the Mahabharat (B.C. 1400) and in other Vedic writings under the name of Shurpárak, and the legend is that the Pandavs, a mythic race of semi-divine giants, rested there in their

galeh of Benjamin of Tudela. Another important name is Moderi-cotta (or Muyiri-Kodu), which appears on the copper-plate charter of the Malabar Jews, and is shown by it (since the King claims to write from both places at once) to be identical with Cranganore. This Muyiri is almost indubitably the Muziris of Roman writers (see McCrindle's *Ptolemy*, p. 51; also Dr. Caldwell's *Dravidian Grammar*. Introduction to p. 97 quoted in McCrindle's *Periplus Maris Erithræi*, p. 131, note). The name *Anuvarnam*, quoted in the copper-plate charter as the name of the particular estate or parcel of land granted to the Jews, is not now traceable. Dr. Burnell well remarks in explanation of difficulties of identification amidst such multiplicity,—"Every town in South India which is known to foreigners by one name (*i.g* Madras, Tanjore) in reality consists of a larger or smaller number of hamlets, each with its distinct name; and as one or the other of these rises in importance by being made a royal residence, or the harbour being altered, or for similar reasons, the whole town changes its name with strangers. Hence the difficulty of identifying some towns in South India, which were formerly well known" (Dr. Burnell in the *Indian Antiquary*, Dec. 1874, Vol. III. pp. 333-334.)

* Report of the Cochin Census for 1891, p. 55, para. 115.

† *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIV., page 314.

progress from the South to Prabhas in Katthiawar.* Indeed, the earliest known fact in the history of the adjacent West Indian Coast is the engraving of the edicts of Ashok (who, from his doing so much to establish Buddhism on the political arm, has been called the Constantine of that religion†) on basalt boulders at Sopár about B.C. 250. A crowning result of recent archæological research in the Konkan has been the unearthing in 1882 at Sopárá of an extremely interesting Buddhist coffer, built into masonry hidden in an earthern mound or hillock containing various figures and relics. It is believed to belong to the time of Gotamiputra II., of the Shatakarni dynasty, about A.D. 160.‡ The coffer, with its contents, is now preserved in the Museum of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Such an important seaport city, with its high religious fame, and its long-continued existence of nearly three thousand years, can hardly fail to have been also a commercial mart of great importance, known and resorted to by all the navigation, foreign and local, of the time. In the judgment of Benfey, Reland, Reinaud§ and others, Sopár has the strongest claim to be considered the Ophir of King Solomon's time; and Yule‖ considers the connection a probable one. In support of this contention there is urged—

---

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, page 316. See also page 417.

† Sir William Hunter's *Indian Empire*, page 144.

‡ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIV., page 332.

§ Benfey in McCrindle's *Periplus Maris Erythræi*, 127; Reland in Ritter's *Erdkunde*, Asien VIII., part 2, 386; Reinaud's *Memoir sur l'Indes*, 222.

‖ Yule's *Cathay*, I, 227.

1. The close resemblance between the words *Sopár* and *Ophir*. Whereas the local inhabitants near Sopárá often change the initial *s* of a word into *h* or drop it,—thus, they say *hona* for *sona* (gold); *hargotala* for *sargotala* (pomphlet); and *hukla* for *sukla* (dried),—we find on the other hand Josephus and the Septuagint writing the word *Ophir* as *Sophir*;* and, according to some, *Sophir* is the Coptic or Egyptian word for *India*.

2. The length of time taken by Solomon's ships—three, or at least two years from the head of the Red Sea to Ophir and back—better suits an Indian than an Arabian voyage.

3. The articles brought by the ships—gold, precious stones, sandalwood, ivory, peacocks and apes, are Indian products.

4. The Hebrew names of several of the articles are believed to have been of Sanscrit or Dravidian origin :—

(i.) Sandalwood. Hebrew *Almug*; Sanscrit, *valgum*.

(ii.) Ivory. Hebrew *Shenhabbim*; *Elephant* is *ibha* in Sanscrit.

(iii.) Ape. Heb. *Koph*; Sanscrit, *kapi*.

(iv.) Peacocks. Heb. *Tukkiim*; Sanscrit, *shikki*; or Dravidian, *tôkei*.†

---

*i. Kings ix. 28, ii. Chron. viii. 18, Job xxii. 24 (Observe both accepted text and various readings.)

† "The ordinary name at present for the peacock on the Malabar Coast, and in Tamil, is *mayil* (Sanscrit, *mayûra*); it is sometimes called *siki* (Sanscrit, *s'ikhi*), a name given to it on account of its crest; but the ancient, poetical, purely Tamil-Malayâlam name of the peacock is *tôkei*, the bird with the (splendid) tail. *S'ikhi=avis cristata; tokei=avis caudata.*"—Milne Rae's *Syrian Church in India*. Page 136.

It is almost needless to point out that, while an emporium like Sopár would have probably been the port to which the earliest navigation from the west would have resorted, on account of its being amongst the first reached by ships hugging the coasts (as the earliest navigation seems to have done), there would of course have been a local Indian coast navigation, bringing merchandise from places even as far south as Mouziris on the Malabar Coast and beyond it to Sopàr.

The Hebrew names for cotton, nard and bdellium are also said to be Sanscritic.

As Sopár at last declined, the Portuguese factory and port of Bassein sprang up some three miles south of its site, in the same way as the Portuguese Fort of Revadanda did near the ancient site of Cheul, and flourished from the middle of the XVIth to the middle of the XVIIIth century. It, with its many churches, is now, also like Revadanda (on a smaller scale), but a scene of ruins. It succumbed to the Marathas, on honourable terms, in A.D. 1739.

A POSSIBLE ANCIENT HOME OF THE BENE-ISRAEL.

SUSPENDING for the moment our remarks on the ancient navigation of Indian seas and coasts, we address our attention to a part of the world which for a variety of reasons appears to have been a likely source of Israelite immigrations into India. We have already (see pages 43 and 44) prepared our readers to find us suggesting that this locality might be looked for in tracts northwards of the Persian Gulf.

The Principal Home of the Israelite Dispersion.

It is, first of all, natural that our thoughts should turn, in the presence of the problem that faces us, to those tracts of country which for so many centuries, partly before and partly after the commencement of the Christian era, formed the enforced home of the multitudes of the exiled sons of Israel. During much of this long period their history in these parts is chiefly veiled in obscurity; but there are not wanting scintillations of light which here and there give us an insight into their condition during the long ages. The ten tribes deported in the VIIIth Century B.C., are described to us in Holy Scripture as

placed by the King of Assyria "in 'Haleb and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and the cities of the Medes"*(II. King xvii. 6), and they never as a body returned to their own land. Of the second captivity, also, great numbers of the Jews never returned to Palestine; but remained to form part of the large body of the Jews of the Diaspora (or Dispersion), which in Babylon was particularly numerous, and which was reinforced, after the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus, by a fresh influx of Jewish exiles from the Holy Land. That Jews during this period were sometimes in high offices of state is clearly shown us by the books of Daniel and of Esther. The curious historical incident related by Josephus of the Israelite (proselyte) Kings of Adiabene, Izates and Monobazes, the latter of whom sent a contingent of soldiers to aid in the defence of Jerusalem against the Romans, is full of significance as to the status and influence of certain Israelites, perhaps of those of the ten tribes, at the period to which it refers. The little robber state of Nehardea, headed for a time by the Israelite brothers Anilai and Asinai, in its short revolt against the Parthians, was in its time no less a sign of a certain degree of Israelite power than of Parthian weakness.† So influential were the Jews in Babylonia, where they had their flourishing Talmudical schools at Pumpeditha, Sura and Nahardea, that they possessed for a long period, as is well known, their own political head in the *Resh Golutha*, or Prince of the Captivity. This rule within a rule, commencing in perhaps the second century, lingered on until the eleventh century; and reminds us of the quasi-regal status which the Jews of Malabar were able to obtain from

* The Record Books of the Jews of Malabar (regarding which see further on in this treatise) whatever their internal discrepancies, all agree in making this their starting-point, which seems significant.

† *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

the Rajahs of that country, as we find it secured to them by their copper-plate charter. It is inherently probable, then, considering the facilities which existed for transit to India that these teeming centres of Israelitish life in the countries of their dispersion north of the Persian Gulf, may have sent off many a contingent for the colonization of Indian shores, especially when driven by persecution, which now and then arose.

But we have more to add in support of our view. It is as follows:—

The Rev. J. H. Brühl on the Israelites in Kurdistan and Persia.

In the opinion of the writer of these lines, a great deal of valuable light may be obtained upon the question in hand from a careful perusal of a pamphlet entitled, *The Ten Tribes; Where are They? By One Who has been Among Them*, published in 1880. The authorship of this monograph is ascribed in the *Jewish Intelligence* of June 1893, as also in the Rev. W. T. Gidney's *Sites* and *Scenes*,* to the late Rev. J. H. Brühl, a no mean authority both as a Talmudist and a scholar. The attention of the reader is at once arrested by a statement in it, (although Mr. Brühl does not throughout the treatise allude to the Bene-Israel of India, and very likely was hardly observant of their existence) to the effect that whilst among the Persian Jews he was "struck with the circumstance that while the Jews in Arabia and Turkey will generally speak of themselves as Jews —Yehoodi—the Persian Jews almost invariably call themselves

* Printed (like the above Pamphlet itself) at the Operative Jewish Converts Institution Press, and obtainable from the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, at 16, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W. C.

Israel."* Mr. Brühl's chief interest, however, is not with the Persian Jews proper, but with a class of people inhabiting Kurdistan, part only of which is under Persian rule. As to the question of the ten tribes he is not bound to any theory of their descendants being discoverable exclusively in any one spot. On the contrary he holds that very many of them must have become fused afresh with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, not only by means of the latter absorbing many of the faithful of the ten tribes during the time of the schism, while both kingdoms were side by side in Palestine (II Chron. xi. 16; xv. 9), and yet again after the ten tribes had been carried into exile, from their remnants in Samaria and elsewhere (II Chron. xxx. 1, 11; xxxiv. 6); but also in after times, when all the twelve tribes were alike in captivity, there is likely to have been extensive amalgamation, since the countries of their respective captivities were not remote from each other, and often were united under the same ruling power.† He is willing to believe that some may be also represented by (or amongst) the Falashas of Abyssinia, and some by Israelites in Arabia, and in other places besides. But his final

* He says, "I am very much inclined to believe that a great part of the Persian Jews are descended from the ten tribes. The geographical position of their country favours the hypothesis." Mr. Gidney, in *Sights and Scenes*, (page 76) remarks that a sign of evident great antiquity of Israelites in Persia is that those now there differ from Jews elsewhere in the world in not having formed any semi-Hebrew *patois* of their own. They all speak Persian, the language of the country, though knowing Hebrew as well. We have already pointed out the unwillingness of the Bene-Israel in the past to be designated Jews. They have always repudiated and objected to the term "Jehoodi" or Jew"; and have insisted on the appellation "Bene-Israel," by which they are known.

† In this way S. James could with the fullest significance address his Epistle to the *twelve tribes* (S. James i. 1), and S. Paul could before Festus with most literal accuracy say, "Unto which promise our *twelve tribes*, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." (Act xxvi. 7).

conclusion is, "that the bulk of the ten tribes, in so far as they are not merged in the rest of Israel at present called Jews, are still to be found in the country whither they were originally exiled by the Kings of Assyria." It is, he considers, easily indentified. It is, in brief, Kurdistan, as now known.

Kurdistan contains a Population within a Population.

Mr. Brühl points out that in Kurdistan there is a population *within* a population. In the midst of the Kurds, (who are are Suni Musalmans), "lives the remnant of another nation, divided indeed by a variety of creeds, but still one in features, habits, and especially in language. While the majority of the inhabitants speak the Kurdish—an Indo-Germanic language closely related to the Persian, —the minority, both Jews and Christians, speak a dialect which they call Syrian, vulgarly Jebeli, *i.e.* the language of the mountain, derived from the language of the Peshito, (*i.e.* the Syriac Version made of the Bible, both Old and New Testamant, about the third century,) which language again is closely related to that of the Targums, and also to the few words of Syriac occurring in the New Testament. It is a remarkable fact that this language is spoken nowhere else either by Jews or Christians, on the face of the earth." It is this minority whom Mr. Brühl would identify with the modern survivors of the ten tribes. There are various arguments in favour of this theory :—

1. It is a tradition amongst these people that their ancestors were Israelites. Mr. Brühl says* that the Nestorians of Kurdistan "unanimously assert that they are the descendants of the ten tribes, and that their ancestors were evangelized by the apostle, S. Peter, in memory of which every one of their

* In the pamphlet above quoted, pp. 13, 14.

Patriarchs is called Mar Shimoom, *i.e.* Simon (Peter)." Mr. Athelstan Riley says of the Nestorian Christians of Kurdistan, "they called themselves Syrians (Soorayee), *claiming a Jewish descent.*"* (Italics are ours.)

2. The compilers of the Babylonian Talmud so regard them. There are various allusions in the Talmud to the subject of the location of the ten tribes, and the value of the evidence is enhanced by the fact that the matter came before the Talmudic doctors not as a matter of mere geographical interest, but of practical legislation in regard to supposed distinctions of purity or impurity of race. as bearing upon questions of intermarriage. So minute were the discriminations made, that in one case two villages of the same name "Apamea," lying on two opposite banks of the same river, are pronounced the one pure and the other impure simply because while the one lies in Babylonia, and is pure as being in the country of the captivity of the two tribes, the other, although but a parasang distant, through lying within the boundaries of the ten tribes is therefore impure,† Mr. Brüll says (page 15)—"One of the rabbis, a great purist in this respect would not let his colleagues depart till they had declared them (*i.e.* the descendants of the ten tribes inhabitating those countries) to be accounted as idolators with regard to intermarriage.‡ Another rabbi prohibits making any proselytes from among the Kurds, giving as a reason that for many generations their neighbours from among the ten tribes had at first promiscuous, and in

* *The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians*, (S.P.C.K.) page 5. *Foot-note.*

† "There are two Apameas, one above, the other below; the one is pure, the other is impure; they are at enmity, and will not even give fire to each other."

‡ In the pamphlet quoted above, pp. 13, 14.

later times incestuous intercourse with the Kurdish women, and and that therefore the whole tribe is suspected of being bastards, who can by no process known to the Talmud ever be purified. Mr. Brühl believes that this rigorism probably led in the course of a couple of centuries to a reaction, it very likely in the meantime having been responsible for too ready a conversion of Israelites to Christianity, so that ever since the rule has stood that every Israelite, however obscure his pedigree, is to be assumed to be of a pure descent until the contrary has been proved. All this helps at any rate to show that to the Jews of the time the existence and the location of their brethren of the ten tribes were things fully known. As to the places of exile mentioned in Scripture, the Talmud identifies as follows:—"Rabbi Abba, the son of Kahna, says in explanation of ii. Kings, xviii. 11. Halah is Helzon, Habor is Hadiab (Adiabene), the river Gozan is Ganzak (Gazake), the cities of Media are Hamadan and its (minor) towns, or as others say, Nahavend and its towns [and they are all to be considered as baseborn]," *Kiddushin 72*, p. 1. A similar identification is given by the Talmud in connection with Dan. vii. 5, where the "three ribs" are curiously interpreted of "Halzon, Hadiab, and Nisibin," in allusion to the way in which these frontier places were continually changing hands between the Roman and Persian Empires. Mr. Brühl points out that the country lying between the four points mentioned, namely Helzon (= Hhalassar, and later Hhelone), Adiabene, Gauzak (= Gazaka of classical writers, on the east of Lake Urumiah), and Hamadan (= Ecbatana, and Achmetha of Ezra vi. 2) in general corresponds to the country known as Kurdistan.

3. Mr. Brühl mentions that there is a curious case in which in the present day the Christian inhabitants of a village called El Kosh, in Kurdistan, the church of which is believed to contain the tomb of Nahum, the Elkoshite, turn out of their church once a year and give it over to Jewish visitants from Mosul, Zakho, and Jezirah, neighbouring towns, who come in large numbers and perform service there on their Feast of Pentecost. This curious fact that the Christians possess an Israelite sanctuary, and yield it thus annually to the Jews, seems to point, he urges, almost necessarily (since Christians were never the governing or conquering race) to a time when Israelites possessing the shrine changed to the Christian faith, and retained possession of it on the ground of this compromise.

Probable Coalescence of some of the Western Dispersion with Christianity and Mahommedanism.

It is likely, therefore, that the history of Israel in Babylonia and Persia, if but more fully known, would reveal, especially in the case of the descendants of the ten tribes, a shading off of many of the community during the passage of centuries, and sometimes under compulsion (it may have been of persecution) into coalescence with those of various differing nationalities and religions. To such origins may not unlikely be referred the traditions, which seem to be the more striking and surprising the more they are looked into, of some of the tribes of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, who claim an Israelite extraction, and to which allusion has already been made in an earlier article, in which mention was made of a recent treatise of Shekh Sadikali, quoted by Mr. E. Solomon.*

* Mr. Bruhl, to quote once more his luminous pamphlet, which we have already brought so much into evidence, says, "There is one more class of people who must be mentioned as likely to contain a

Early Persian Christianity in Evidence in India.

Now whether there be doubt or no as to whether Jews from Babylonia and Persia migrated into India and formed settlements on its western coasts or no, there is practically certain proof that Christians who were the neighbours of Jews in the aforesaid regions, did no less. It is quite impossible to overlook the strong evidences that exist of early Christianity in India having had the closest connection with Babylonia and Persia. Without necessarily going the length of Professor Milne Rae,* who holds that the actual beginnings of Christianity in India were Nestorian and Persian in origin, and that the deeply-rooted belief of Christians in South India of the foundation of their Church by S. Thomas in person is to be regarded but as the "migration of a tradition" from a Parthian India between Persia and the Indus, what is nevertheless of patent and admitted fact is that early Indian Christianity, when it emerges into clear history in the sixth century, wears a strong and unmistakeable Persian colouring.† There was at that time Nestorian Christianity and a Nestorian bishop at Kalliana, which is almost certainly the present railway junction Kallian

large admixture of Israelites. Persia, though outwardly altogether Mahomadan, contains a large number of people who secretly repudiate that religion altogether They are called 'Ali Haila.' the people or worshippers of Ali. But this Ali-worship is only a pretext to conciliate the fanatical Persians, who themselves pay almost Divine honours to Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomad. The real object of their worship are their peers, *i.e.* deceased saints, whom they consider as emanations from or incarnations of the Deity. The few whose confidence I was able to gain mentioned to me as their peers mostly saints and heroes of the Old Testament, *e.g.* Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin, Joshua Saul, David, Solomon, and others, whose names occur in the Old Testament."—p. 17.

* See his *Syrian Church in India*, Chap. ii.

† See Sir W. Hunter's *Indian Empire*, p. 235.

situated 35 miles N.E. of Bombay, on the banks of a fine creek.* It drew its bishops from Ktesiphon *(i.e. Seleucia)* † At Sopárá, already mentioned, 35 miles N. of Bombay, and some 20 miles west of Kallian, the friar Jordanus found in 1322 Nestorian Christians, and a church dedicated to S. Thomas the Apostle, a survival probably of those at Kallian.‡ Almost, if not quite, the earliest positive relics of Christianity in South India, are two Persian crosses carved on stone, the one discovered at Mylapur, a suburb of Madras, and the other existing in the oldest Syrian church at Kottayam, in Travancore, on the Malabar coast.§ It is well-known that the Christianity of Malabar was for several centuries of the Nestorian form, drawing its bishops from Seleucia-Ktesiphon on the Tigris.

Persian Christianity in Malabar side by side with an ancient Jewish community, both possessing charters engraved on copper-plates from the old Rajahs of Cochin.

Now, it is also in Malabar that we still find a Jewish and a Christian community, both of very ancient origin, side by side, just as by Mr. Brühl's showing, such once apparently existed side by side in Persia, and at any rate do in fact so now exist. In a recent article in the *Malabar Quarterly Review* (since reprinted as a pamphlet) ¶ the present writer has endeavoured to show that the really ancient Jews in Malabar are now represented by a class intermediate between the so-

* This is narrated by Kosmas Indiko-pleustes. See *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. xiv. p. 119.

† *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. xiii., Pt. ii., p. 417. *Note.*

‡ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. xiv. pp. 321, 322.

§ For a good account of these see Milne Rae's *Syrian Church in India*. Chap. IX.

¶ Partly reproduced and summarized later on in the present treatise.

called "white" Jews (who are comparatively modern) and the "black" Jews, (who are of mixed origin. This intermediate class, who style themselves *M'yukhasim* (meaning "those of lineage," and sometimes of late described as the "brown" Jews) approximate in the opinion of the writer very much to the type and appearance of the Bene-Israel of Bombay; and the separate class of "black" Israel is found amongst both.

Israelite settlement in India apparently not accomplished all at one time.

Another point is worth attention here. In the traditions both of the Jews and of the Syrian Christians of Malabar, we find alike belief in *relays* of colonisers having arrived from time to time. Amongst the Christians these traditions connected themselves, for instance, first with the arrival of S. Thomas the Apostle about A.D. 50, next with the arrival of another Thomas (a supposed Manichean) in the third century, and once again with the arrival of Thomas Cana, an influential Armenian merchant, about A.D. 780. The Jews of Malabar hold (and appeal in support of their belief to supposed record books in their possession) that their original settlers were Israelites of the first captivity, who came and took up their abode in Malabar; that in after times subsequently to the captivity of the two tribes, others of their brethren, hearing of their well-being in India, followed them, prominent among these being Joseph Rabban,* who received on behalf of his community from the ruler of the part of Malabar in which they dwelt a grant of territory with various other privileges annexed, the right to which was secured to them by these being engraved on

*The so-called record-book (*dibre hayamim*) of the Jews of Cochin however, claims that Joseph Rabban came from Arabia.

a copper-plate charter, which they still possess. Similar charters also engrayed on copper-plates were conferred at the same time on the Christians of Malabar. The traditions mentioned seem to favour the supposition that there were early settlements of Israelites in Malabar which were in a way pre-historic (considering how sadly late in date are the beginnings of real history in India), and in the wake of these it is likely there followed not only further accessions of their own fellow-countrymen, the Jews, but also, in their time Christian Evangelists (perhaps Apostolic even?) and also Christian (Persian?) settlers.

Conclusion from foregoing.

It is almost needless to point out that it is no part of the present writer's object to attempt to show that either the Bene-Israel of Bombay, or the Jews of the Malabar coast, are descended from the ten tribes. But we ask, does it not appear reasonable to believe, and likely on the face of it, that the regions of Babylonia and Persia, which in past times gave the Parsees to India,* and which still continue to give it the Iranis (or modern Persians);† regions, whence, as we have noted, proceeded influences which in bygone times have stamped their impress upon Indian architecture, and which are known to have been intimately connected through trade and commerce from times of dim antiquity with India and parts beyond; which also during many centuries and under varying vicissitudes of fortune, gave shelter and *habitat*, forced or voluntary, to large

* See important footnote in the *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. xiii. Pt. i. pp. 247, 248.

† A large number of the restaurants frequented by natives in the bazaars of Bombay are kept by "Iranis," who are famed as cooks.

masses of the exiled sons of Israel,*—are likely to have been the countries which gave the original stock of Israelitish settlers to India, as well as many subsequent accessions thereto, however these may have been supplemented at various times and by varying routes by Jewish visitors from many other countries? In times of persecution, especially, may such have been induced to migrate to India.†

A Corroboration.

It is observable, as harmonizing well with our present theory, that a staple occupation of the Jews in Persia is stated to be that of merchandize in silk,‡ and as the earliest known trade-route to China was from the West, it is not unlikely that Persian Jews were led in quest of this trade, amongst others, along the beaten tracks of commerce to various points on the Indian coast which were the emporia of that trade, and perhaps even round India, or across it, to China itself,§ where the tradition exists that the Jews first came to it from the west, by the way of the sea.‖ The Bokhara Jews also come

* Babylonia was the "very focus of Judaism for more than a thousand years."—*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Art. "Babylonia."

† One such period of sharp persecution occurred in Babylonia in the time of Firuz (or Peroz) the wicked, in the year A.D. 468, which the Talmud designates "The year of the destruction of the word."—See *Jewish Encyclopedia* under heading "Babylonia," quoting Bruhl's *Jahrbuch*, x. 118

‡ Though the poorest are engaged even in brickmaking, or as pedlars, diviners, musicians, wine-sellers, and scavengers.—*Jewish Intelligence*. March, 1904. Page 38.

§ "Jews in Persia from early times were connected with the silk-trade, and as a consequence entered into direct relations with the "Silkmen" ("Seres" from "Ser" = Heb *Seraim* = "Sericum" = "Silk") as the Chinese were called by the Romans."—*Jewish Encyclopedia*, under heading "China."

‖ See *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Art. "China."

into evidence here, for while, on the one hand, the remnant of Jews at K'ai-Fung-Fu in China are shown, by the Persian rubrics in their liturgies being in the Bokhara dialect of that language, to have probably come from Bokhara itself, whence they may have eventually found the overland route to China, the Jews of Bokhara, on the other hand, whose occupation is said to be largely that of dyeing silk, are declared by their mother-tongue being Persian to be derived from the Persian Jews.*

Development of Israelite settlements on Indian coasts probably affected by caprices of local rule.

One more point we would venture to bring into notice here. It is known that on the Konkan coasts the encouragement given to foreign trade was once apt to be capricious and fitful. At one time, under a favourable set of rulers, it would be fostered, and under another it would be summarily suppressed. Thus, about the middle of the third century A. D. the foreign trade which had long flourished at Cheul and other Konkan ports under the Shátkarni kings, was stopped by a king named Sandanes, and all foreign vessels were sent on under guard to Barugaza (Broach) in north Gujerat.† It is permissible to apply this known fact to a possible elucidation of one of the problems connected with the Bene-Israel. They present exactly the appearance of a people who having been originally of a common stock with the early Israelite settlers in Malabar, must have become at some period later on largely isolated, and so have developed independently. The "Brown" Jews (or "M'yukhasim") of Malabar have retained

* See *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Art. "Bokhara."

† See *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII. Pt. 2. p. 418. Vol. XI. p. 140, etc.

their knowledge of Hebrew, and their conversance with Jewish customs and practices. With the Bene-Israel, on the other hand, almost as with the Jews at K'ai-Fung-Fu, the knowledge of Hebrew had been almost lost, and most Jewish practices were in abeyance, as we pointed out in an early part of these articles. What so likely, then, though it must remain matter of speculation after all, as that the Bene-Israel, whose forefathers had settled near the ports of Cheul, Janjira, and others, at times when foreign trade was open, found themselves in later times shut off in large degree from the outer world, and their communication with their brethren for the most part cut off? The foreign trade with the Malabar ports does not seem to have been subjected to such violent interruptions as beset it in the Konkan, and Barugaza (Broach) in north Gujerat, seems to have been largely exempt also, both thus continuing to invite foreign trade.

THE EARLY NAVIGATION OF INDIAN SEAS.

It remains for us now to end our treatment of the present part of our subject, by completing our remarks on the early navigation of Indian seas, in order to show yet more fully the facilities which existed of old for Israelite or other foreign travellers reaching the distant shores of India. We shall, in doing this again draw largely on Sir James Campbell's *Bombay Gazeteer*.

The oldest shipping, as we should expect, tended to hug the coasts. The greatest venture into the open seas would probably be the crossing of the Persian Gulf in the case of vessels coming from the Red Sea.* This older route was at

* The following is given in reference to the Egyptian trade with India by the *Bombay Gazeteer*, (Vol. XIII. Pt. 2, p. 410, *note*):—"Accord-

first adhered to by the Romans after their conquest of Egypt in B.C. 30. But later on, after the discovery by Hyppalus (about A. D. 47) of the periodic monsoon winds, thenceforward called after his name (though they had probably been known to older sailors also) the system of navigation to India changed, and a direct course was generally adopted. Something however still depended upon the part of the Indian coast intended to be reached. If going to Barugaza (the modern Broach, situated in the Gulf of Cambay, in the north of the Bombay Presidency) navigators could, after leaving the Gulf of Aden, stand out at once to sea, and find the wind blowing in the exact direction of their course. If, however, going to Mouziris (Cranganore) on the Malabar coast, they would need to often change their track.* The trade to the Konkan was thus in some ways more convenient than that to Malabar, and there was a well-known route along the Arab coast to Fartak Point, and thence across to the Konkan.†

The trade between India and the Persian Gulf is older, in all probability, than even that with Arabia and parts beyond; for the voyage was shorter, sailing in the Persian

ing to Pliny (A.D. 79), the practice of ships engaged in the Indian trade was to start from Muos Hormus, at the mouth of the Gulf of Suez, about the beginning of July, and slip about 250 miles down the coast to Berenike in the modern Foul Bay. To load at Berenike and sail thirty days to Okellis, the modern Ghalla or Cella, a little north of Guardafui. From Ghalla to coast along east Arabia to near Cape Fartak, and, in about forty days, to make the Konkan near the end of September. To stay in the Konkan till the middle of December or the middle of January, reach the Arab or African coast in about a month, wait at Aden or some other port till about March, when the south winds set in, and then to make for Berenike and pass on to Muos Hormus, at the mouth of the gulf of Suez. *Vincent's Commerce of the Ancients II. 319, 374. Pliny's Natural History*, Bk. VI. Ch. xxiii.

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII. Pt. 2, p. 410, *note*, quoting McCrindle's *Periplus*.

† Ibid. *Supra*.

Gulf was easier, and the inland route was less barren.* Original traders, in times of dim antiquity, were probably the Phœnicians, who apparently moved from Bahrein on the Persian Gulf, north-westwards to the Mediterranean coasts.† Rawlinson believes that Gerrha on the mainland, close to the island of Bahrein, on the west side of the Gulf, was the emporium of the Indian trade, and thinks that its old name of Apir marks it out as the site of Solomon's Ophir.‡ But the head of the Persian Gulf seems to have been no less a place of trade with India than its western shores. Isaiah the prophet describes the Babylonians as delighting in their ships,§ Rawlinson tells us that Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 606—561 built quays and embankments of solid masonry on the Persian Gulf, and traded with Ceylon and western India.‖ In course of time came the Palmyra trade, the markets of which were supplied not only from Gerrha near Bahrein, already mentioned (the wares of which passed to it in caravans across Arabia), but also from the head of the Persian Gulf, passing up the Euphrates by Babylon and Ktesiphon, to a large and famous

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII. Pt. 2, p. 405, *note*.

† Ibid.

‡ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII. Pt. ii. p. 405, *note*—quoted in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (New Series) XII. 214. We have given in a preceding article reasons for thinking that Ophir may rather be identified with Sopara on the Bombay coast.

§ Isaiah xliii. 14. In the sixth century B.C. "men of Dedan, or (Bahrein), brought ebony and ivory to Tyre. Ezekiel xxvii. 15." *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII. Pt. 2, p. 405, *note* (quoting Heeren's Historical Researches).

‖ *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIII. Pt. 2. p. 405, *note*. Ceylon, it may be remarked, under its ancient name of Taprobane was once a great meeting-place of trade between the western and eastern coasts of India, as well as between these and China and other parts of the Far East.

mart which became established in A.D. 60, named Vologesocerta.*

We have already drawn attention more than once to certain of the Indian ports which at different times existed to give haven to ships arriving from foreign ports. The ancient and far-famed port of Barugaza (Broach) comes into view as a well-established port in the early days of the Christian era, and figures in the writings of Ptolemy and of the author of the *Periplus Maris Erythræi*. The direct trade with Egypt centred here, and we have already seen that it was a port which was sometimes allowed to remain open when Konkan ports generally were closed, by the caprice of their rulers, to foreign trade.

Kalliena, 35 miles north of Bombay (if the identification be correct, as seems to be certain), to which we have already alluded as once the seat of a Nestorian bishopric, was a port of some importance in the foreign trade at the end of the second century, A.D. It figures in nine Buddhist inscriptions (extending over the first to the sixth centuries) at the Kanheri Caves, near Bombay.† In A.D. 525 it had much traffic with Ceylon, then the great centre of trade in the East; and with the Persian Gulf, to Hira near Kufa to and, Obolleh.‡ In the seventh century it became eclipsed by Thana, a seaport some five miles south. Both places still survive as small seaports.

Of Cheul, almost certainly the ancient Simulla or Timulla, situated thirty miles south of Bombay, and bordering on the

Bombay Gazeteer, Vol. XIII. Part 2. p. 412. We have already, in the footnote of a previous article, mentioned some of the characteristic wares of this market, and observed how they point to a close connection with India, and through India with China.

†*Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIV. page 119.

‡*Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XIV. pp. 119, 120. Vol. XIII. Pt. 2. Page 420.

district over which we find the Bene-Israel now spread, we have already written in some detail. It was a centre of foreign trade when Ptolemy wrote (A.D. 155), and though, as we have seen, its foreign trade afterwards received violent interruption, it still remained a chief port of India when the Portuguese arrived.

Zizerus was another ancient port, somewhat south of Cheul, and is mentioned by Pliny in A.D. 77, and perhaps also, under the name of Sigerdis, by Strabo. It is believed by many to be represented by the modern Janjira, the chief city of a State of the same name, which coming later under Abyssinian rule, has thence been called the Habshan. Its position, if Janjira, marks the southern extremity of the tract of country inhabited by the Bene-Israel.

Passing far south, and omitting several ports of undoubted antiquity by the way, we come, on the coast of Malabar, to the famous port of Mouziris, which was identical with Mudiricotta, or Muyirikudu, and also with Kodungalur, called by the Portuguese Cranganore. This is the historic site of the first abode of the Malabar Jews, and on this part of the coast are also the towns and villages inhabited by the Syrian Christians, or the Christians of S. Thomas. From its situation on the borders of the spice and pepper yielding countries, it drew to itself the fleets not only of Roman merchants, but of many others besides. Situated a few miles south of it is now the modern port of Cochin. We have already, in a foot-note to previous page, made some mention of Mouziris.

The above are examples of some of the ports which on the western side of India extended hospitality, more or less constantly, to foreign merchants and foreign shipping.

Corresponding to these were important seaports on the other side of India, which gathered the produce of their own side of India, and often from China, Malacca, and other countries besides. On the Coromandel coast, near the mouth of the Krishna river, was an important town and seaport mentioned both by Ptolemy and the *Periplus* as Maisolia or Masolia, where immense quantities of fine muslin were made. This place probably corresponds to the modern Masulipatam, and has been thought by some to be likely rather than Mosul to be the origin of the word "Muslin."*

Inland, between these western and eastern ports, were the two great trade-marts of Tagar and Paithan. The latter, called Baithana or Paithana by Ptolemy and by the *Periplus*, is a town in the Nizam's dominions on the left bank of the river Godaveri. Tagar is thought by some to be represented by the present Junnar, some 70 miles north of Poona (Jun-Nagar, or "Old City.") According to Ptolemy, Paithana was a twenty days' journey southward of Barugaza, and eastwards about ten days' journey from this was Tagar.† By means of these and other marts connected with them, goods were apparently collected from the ports along the coast of Bengal; and also along this route, there is reason to believe, came silk and some of the finer

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI. p. 138, *note*. Also Vol. XIII. Pt. 2, p. 415, *note*.

† "From these marts goods are transported on waggons to Barugaza, through difficult regions that have no road worth calling such. From Paithana large quantities of onyx stones, and from Tagar large supplies of common cotton cloth, muslins of all kinds, mallow-tinted cottons, and various other articles of local production are imported into it from the maritime districts."—*McCrindle's Ptolemy*, p 176. According to Ptolemy's description Tagar can hardly be Junnar.

spices from the eastern archipelago and China, and passed along to the western ports of India, thence to be carried by foreign shipping more westward still. Such goods as did not find their way by this overland route found their way round by the coasting vessels.

It is to be observed that foreign trade from the western ports was ever at its best when both the ports and chief inland markets happened to be united under one strong rule, and that rule favourable to trade.* When, as so often happened in India, one power would be in control of the ports and another of the inland markets and the two opposed to each other, and, perhaps one or both of them opposed to foreign trade, commerce would suffer in consequence; but even so, trade to some extent adjusted itself; for, avoiding forbidden ports, coasting vessels would pass along to meet Egyptian vessels at Mouziris or Nelkynda, on the Malabar coast; or would go on still farther to Ceylon, (then commonly named Taprobane,) and perhaps on to the Coromandel coast, to fetch the muslins of Masulipatam.† In any case the trade, adapting itself to changing vicissitudes, was on the whole constant, and at times abundant.

---

* *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI. p. 136. Vol. XIII. Pt. 2, p. 403, and especially p. 412.

† *Bombay Gazeteer*, Vol. XI. p. 140. Vol. XIII. Pt. ii. p. 418.

III

THE JEWS OF MALABAR.

WHEN we come to treat of the Jews of the Malabar coast we alight on a region over which the light of early history, though still dim, shines a little more clearly than elsewhere in India. Allusions to the Jews of this part are to be found here and there in the writings of travellers of some antiquity.* Actual historic records exist in the shape of some engraved copper-plates, conveying certain political rights, which are preserved as an heirloom in the Jewish community at Cochin. There survive amongst the Jews of Malabar versions of certain written records claiming to be historical, though the same are much at variance amongst themselves, and have apparently been sometimes interpolated, if not, indeed, at some time reproduced altogether from memory from certain older lost or destroyed records. Again, analogies between the circumstances of the Jews and other ancient foreign communities on the coast exist and can be compared. Are there Jews who have been located on these shores from times immemorial? There are *Christians* there, the time of whose arrival is lost in antiquity. Are there Jews using a Shemitic language in the form of Hebrew in their synagogues in Malabar? There are *Christians* in Malabar using a Shemitic language in their worship, in the shape of Syriac liturgies. Is it a question whence the Jews first of all came? It is no less a question whether the earliest Christianity came directly by way of Egypt, or round by Persia and the Persian

* Benjamin of Tudela (as usually understood,—but see Appendix) mentions them in A.D. 1167. R. Maharikash deals with casuistical questions from them about A.D. 1600,

Gulf, and whether it was brought first in an undiluted and *orthodox form, perhaps even by an Apostle, in the very dawn* of Christianity; or whether it came in later days wearing a Nestorian or Jacobite garb from the time of its first introduction. Again, Were the Jews once high in favour with the ruling powers of Malabar, and the recipients of substantial tokens of that favour? The Christians were so also. Both communities in the zenith of their affluence and power in Malabar were alike granted charters conveying various political privileges and royal concessions as well as grants of land, the record of these being engraved on copper tablets, after the manner of the time, and accredited with the seal (in the form of a conch-shell marked upon them) of the reigning monarch, generally believed to have been Cheraman Perumal. These copper-plates exist now amongst both communities, and have been often translated and described.*

ETHNOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The Problem of Colour.

The *colour* of the Jews of Malabar is a topic which has engaged the attention of a considerable number of writers. Several observers have exercised themselves to determine almost the very hue and shade of the complexions of these Israelitish denizens of Indian shores. Benjamin of Tudela in A.D. 1167 † speaks of there being "only about one hundred Jews, who are of black colour." Menasseh Bene-Israel in A.D. 1655,

* A particularly able description of them, with facsimiles, and a scholarly translation, will be found in the *Indian Antiquary* for December 1874 (Vol. III. pp. 333, 334), in the form of an article by A. C. Burnell, Ph.D., M.C.S., entitled, *The Original Settlement Deed of the Jewish Colony at Cochin.*

† Assuming him to refer to the Jews of Malabar—see Appendix.

when addressing Cromwell with the hope of inducing him to permit the return of the Jews to England, and being anxious to impress upon him that the Jews are not an insignificant people, and "how profitable the Nation of the Jews are," points to their affluence and high political standing in Cochin, and remarks, "These in India, in Cochin, have four synagogues, one part of these Jews being there of a white colour, and three* of a *tawny*; these being *most* favoured of the king."† Amongst a succession of more recent writers we meet with the familiar twofold classification of the "White" and "Black" Jews of Cochin. And later on we are apprised of the "White," "Brown," and "Black" Jews of Cochin, the earliest exponent of this threefold division of whom I have record being the Rev. T. Whitehouse, in an article in *Evening Hours* for 1873.‡ Jacob Saphir,§ a Jewish traveller who visited his co-religionists in Cochin in recent years, having described some of the Jews resident there as black, hastens to tone down his words, and

---

* The "three" are probably (i.) the *M'yukhasim*, or 'they of lineage'; (ii) the *M'shuharar'im*, or the 'manumitted'; and (iii) the *Abadim*, or 'slaves,'—an actual classification among the Black Jews of Cochin.

† It will frequently be apparent when studying the history of the Jews of Cochin, that while the White Jews have always been the ones to stand highest in the estimation of European invaders, whether Portuguese, Dutch or English, it is the Black Jews who have consistently enjoyed the favour of the Hindu Rajahs of Cochin. The Black Jews attribute many of the misunderstandings that exist amongst European writers concerning them to the fact that the White Jews being able to speak the language of the latter, and being socially more on a level with them, have been able the more readily to obtain their ear, and to present their own version of matters. It is only comparatively lately that the Black Jews have so much as known what accounts have been given of them by the White Jews.

‡ I have not been able to get access to Mr. Whitehouse's *Historical Notices of Cochin*.

§ He is the author of *Eben Saphir*, or *The Stone of Saphir*.

adds, "They are not black like the raven, or as the Nubians, but only as the appearance of copper." But Hayim Jacob HaCohen,* another modern Jewish traveller, chastizing the latter for calling them "black" at all, declares that he will write of this class everywhere as the "non-white," and never anywhere (God forbid!) as the "Black." It is very wrong, he says, to exaggerate in this manner, for their colour is like that of the Yemen or Arabian Jews, whereas some writers erroneously confuse them with the M'shuhararim, the section of the converted slaves, by calling them "Black" Jews.

Origin of the Distinction "White" and "Black."

Now, as a rule, the description of the Jews of Malabar as "White" and "Black" is one emanating from European travellers, both non-Jewish and Jewish. Accustomed to all the Jews of European and other countries of which they have had experience being of one uniform fair complexion, the discovery of Jews of colour has filled them with surprise, and they have duly noted the novel fact. They have merely written of things as they have been struck by them. Such descriptions have no invidious suggestion about them. But the use of "White" and "Black" amongst such must be carefully distinguished from a mode which the Indian Jews have of using the same terms amongst themselves. Amongst the Bene-Israel of the Bombay Presidency, for instance (as has been already shown in a previous page), and probably it may be the same elsewhere, the term "Black" has a strictly technical meaning of serious import, which has a very invidious application indeed, since it denotes those born of concubinage with Indian women, and

* Author of *Mashbith Milhamoth*, or *Assuager of Battles.*

who in consequence are precluded from full membership and from intermarriage with those of the other class.

The so-called "Black" Jews, including a third class, are representative of the earliest Jewish Settlers.

It is when they come to *interpret* the problem of colour amongst the Jews of Malabar that European writers are generally found on debateable ground. In the present treatise the writer is about to uphold the theory that it is amongst the "Black" Jews of Cochin that the lineal descendants of the earliest Jewish settlers on the Malabar Coast of India are to be sought, though such a view will bring him into conflict with many modern writers.

The separation of the Jews of Cochin into the threefold division of "White," "Brown" and "Black," as adopted and put forth by Mr. Whitehouse and some others, however peculiar it may be in appearance, has at any rate the advantage of being a classification that is scientific. It recognizes the existence of the M'YUKHASIM, or "those of lineage," amongst the Black* Jews, as a class distinct from the rest of that

* The present writer continues throughout this paper to use the term "Black Jews" in the sense which (however wrongly) has become the popular one, and which, being now generally understood, conduces much to brevity. Were he to do otherwise these pages would be prolonged by numerous periphrases and needlessly repeated definitions. It will be understood that in the writer's own view there are really three classes amongst the present Jews of Malabar *viz.*, (i.) the WHITE JEWS, or Pardesis, (i.e., *foreigners*); (ii.) the M'YUKHASIM; and (iii.) the NON-M'YUKHASIM, or Jews of mixed origin. Thus, the designation "Black Jews," in the popular (and, as the present writer believes, *mistaken*) acceptation of the term, embraces both the *M'yukhasim* and the *non-M'yukhasim*. Mr. Whitehouse however divides more correctly, though interpreting the classes wrongly, terming the M'yukhasim the *Brown* and the non-M'yukhasim the *Black* Jews. It is the M'YUKHASIM whom the present writer recognizes as the lineal descendants of the original settlers.

section. But the *interpretation* of that threefold division, by which Mr. Whitehouse (who is followed more or less by Dr. Burnell, Dr. Day, Professor Milne Rae,* and others) would account for the Brown Jews as "the offspring of White Jews by native mothers," and for the Black Jews as "the offspring of proselytes from the low caste natives of Indian," must be regarded as an explanation of matters as generally inaccurate as his threefold classification by itself is correct. To begin with, it is not probable, on the face of it, that the two classes (the Brown and the Black) could, on any such theory of their respective origins, have continued for long distinct at all. They must soon have merged into one, and then Mr. Whitehouse would have found no Brown class to describe. Moreover, we ask, Is it conceivable that any class of people with the origin attributed to the Black Jews by Mr. Whitehouse, could ever have held up their heads before Kings and Princes, and have stood high in the favour of the Hindu Rajah, in the way that Menasseh Ben Israel addressing Cromwell boldly represents the dark-coloured Jews of Cochin as doing? Or, again, Can we imagine a class of the origin suggested being the recipients of a singular mark of favour from the Rajah, such as was shown in the grant of land made to the Black Jews at Ernakulam† as recently as A.D. 1711, to say nothing of earlier favours?

---

* See Burnell, in *The Indian Antiquary* for December 1874 (Vol. III. pp. 333, 334); Dr. Day, *The Land of the Permauls.* Ganz Brothers, Madras, 1863; Prof. Milne Rae, *The Syrian Church in India,* Wm. Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1892.

† Ernakulam is a town situated on the mainland opposite to Cochin across the Backwater at distance of about two miles. The Rajah has a palace in its vicinity, as well as at Cochin; and at Ernakulam are situated the chief public offices of the Cochin Native State.

Analogy of the Bene-Israel of Bombay.

But fortunately some light of a more positive character can be thrown on the vexed question from another quarter. The Jews of Cochin, as it happens, are not the only Israelitish inhabitants of Indian coasts. We have already described at some length the "Bene-Israel" of the Bombay Presidency. These, while hardly second in interest to the Jews of Malabar, are in numbers largely superior.* They are as far removed from any modern type of Jews as are any on the Malabar Coast itself. There is no question about the antiquity of their arrival in India. They share the problem of colour with the Jews of Malabar, Yemen, and elsewhere. Circumstances have led to their being for long periods together largely cut off and dissociated from their brethren in South India. One cause of this may have been, as we have suggested, the intolerance of Konkan rulers, and the aversion which is known to have existed, from A. D. 247 onward, towards foreign maritime traffic, on the part of some of the Konkan kings. To this severance may be attributed perhaps the loss of Hebrew learning amongst the Bene-Israel, which has been a characteristic of their past, and in which respect they stand in contrast with their brethren of Cochin. Still, on account of this very isolation they stand to us in the light of independent witnesses, and invite a comparative study. What is to be considered to be the origin of *this* Israelite community on Indian shores? Are *they* to be accounted for in the way the White Jews of Cochin would account for their darker brethren? If so, where is the remnant of the white community from which they sprang? Where is there

* They number, as we have shown, about ten thousand. According to the census of 1901 the Jews of the Cochin State number as follows,—White Jews, 180. Black Jews, 957. In all 1,137.

so much as any trace or remembrance of such? It has fallen to the lot of the writer during many years now to see a great deal of the Bene-Israel, and having also seen the M'yukhasim, or Brown Jews, of Malabar, one thing which has impressed itself strongly on his mind as the result of it all is that there is, allowing for local differences of intermixture by marriage with Indian proselytes, &c., a real identity of type characterizing the two. If this be established as an ethnological fact, it will go far to show that both are lineal descendants of some common Jewish stock to be sought for not in modern times, but in the distant past, and it will be a further reason for discarding the views of those who see in the Black Jews of Malabar only a congerie of persons of native or mixed origin, who in times past are supposed to have adopted the Jewish creed, not having been originally born thereto.

Several Writers of weight have recognized the true distinction.

Although the writers who have sought to account for the origin of the Black (including the Brown) Jews of Malabar in the way that Mr. Whitehouse and others have done, are both numerous, and are also authorities of weight, it is by no means all, or even always those possessed of most weight who have done so. Dr. Buchanan himself says of the Jews in Cochin, "The resident Jews are divided into two classes, called the Jerusalem or White Jews; and the *ancient* or Black Jews;" * and again, he records his deliberate verdict, "It is only necessary to look at the countenance of the Black Jews to be satisfied that their ancestors must have arrived in India many ages before the White Jews."† Dr. Wilson writes,

* Buchanan's *Christian Researches*, 11th Ed. Page 221.

† Ibid.

"The accounts given of themselves by the White Jews of Cochin, are, to a great extent, fabulous. These Jews profess to be descendants of Jews who came to India immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem; but their family names, such as David Castil (David the Castilian) go to prove that they are descendants of the Jews of Spain, probably of those driven from that country in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella; and of German and Egyptian Jews—a fact which has been long ago noticed. The real ancient Jews of Cochin are the Black Jews."* Travellers who are Jews themselves may be supposed to be good judges of matters relating to their own people. Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel, from Jerusalem, published in Madras in 1832 an account of his travels. He writes, "The Black Jews believe themselves to be the descendants of the first captivity who were brought to India, and did not return with the Israelites who built the Second Temple. This account I am inclined to believe correct; though Black Jews,—they are of somewhat darker complexion than the White Jews,—yet they are not the colour of the natives of the country, or of persons descended from Indian slaves." Concerning the White Jews he writes, "I . . . . have reason to suppose that the White Jews arrived there some little time before the Portuguese, for I have met in parts of Europe with persons of the same family names with those in Cochin, *eg.*, the Rotenboorgs, Tserfates, Ashkenazim, and Sargons, &c. They have no Mss. more than two or three centuries old."† Another Jewish writer, Mr. A. Asher, edited

* Dr. Wilson's, *The Bene-Israel of Bombay: An Appeal for their Christian Education*. 1st Ed. Bombay, 1854. 2nd Ed. Edinburgh, 1865. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. III. pp. 321, 323. In a footnote in the latter Dr. Wilson expresses his personal opinion that these "ancient Jews of Cochin" are descendants of Judæan, Arabian and Indian proselytes.

† *The Travels of Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel*. Madras, 1832, pages 117, 125.

the Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela. In it he writes of the Jews of Cochin as follows; "The former (the Black Jews) are beyond doubt the more ancient of the two classes which settled near Quilon . . . . We hope to have proved that Benjamin of Tudela is no mean authority, and it certainly remains difficult to explain why *he* should not have mentioned the White Jews also, had they been established in his time; he who so diligently collected all information respecting his brethren would certainly not have omitted to give an account of this remarkable colony . . . . All the family names of the *White Jews now living on the spot, viz.* Mizri,* Alegna, Kodar, Sarphatz, Rottenburg, &c., at once prove their origin to have been either Egyptian, Spanish or German.† In the *Noticias dos Judæos de Cochin*, published in Amsterdam in 1686, it is stated that the first Spanish Jews arrived at Cochin in A.D. 1511. It is also said in the same, that the Black Jews are from early times; the White ones from the preceding century.‡

Grounds of the Claim of the M'yukhasim to represent the Original Jewish Settlers.

Some of the arguments put forward by the M'yukhasim among the Black Jews in support of their claims are as follows:—

* Whether "Mizri," which means "The Egyptian," has been actually known in Cochin as a surname, I am not able to say; but if not, it may be a slip of the pen for "Rahabi," which has the same meaning, and which is omitted from this list, though well-known amongst the White Jews of Cochin. It is now sometimes written "Roby."

† *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela. Translated and Edited by A. Asher.* London and Berlin, 1840. [See, however, Appendix to the present work.]

‡ *The Oriental Christian Spectator* for September, 1839. (Vol. X., page 361.)

1. The copper-plate charter itself purports to be given to Joseph Rabban. The Record Book * of the White Jews, alike with that of the Black Jews, asserts that Joseph Rabban came from Yemen in Arabia. He could not, therefore, be one of the White Jews.

2. There are certain characteristic differences in ritual and religious observances between the White and Black Jews, which betoken an independent origin for each community on these shores. Though both use the same Hebrew liturgy, yet both have also collections of additional Hymns and Songs for use at the Feast of Tabernacles, and on other occasions; and these differ characteristically in the two communities, falling into two classes, proper to the two sets respectively. The song-book of the Black Jews was first published in Amsterdam in A.D. 1668 (a second edition being afterwards printed at Leghorn). The White Jews have a similar song-book, printed within five or six years of the former, and in the same publishing office, and with the same Editor, but *with differences*. For instance, it *begins* differently, one song on the second page being wanting. Certain wedding-songs, composed by the ancestors of the Black Jews are wanting among the wedding songs. One of these omitted ones is a song composed by one Jacob Bar Banaiah, one of the ancestors of the Black Jews. It is an alphabetical song, repeating the name of its writer acrostically. Other differences need not be pointed out in detail; those mentioned are enough to show their distinct character. The two books apparently date from a time when there was no open breach between

* *i.e.* Their *Dibre Hayamim* = *Acts of the Days* = *Chronicles*. This is the Hebrew name of the Books of Chronicles of the Bible, and is the term used by the Jews for their official records or history in any place. Such records should by rights bear the signature from time to time of the ruling prince of their community.

the two communities, for the Editor in his preface to the book prepared for the Black Jews states that the book was edited with the help of Ezekiel Rahabi, who is sometimes regarded as the first immigrant of the White Jews to Cochin, and he also gives in its preface information obtained from the White Jews. The title-pages of the two books differ no less characteristically than their contents. The White Jews in their book are spoken of as the *Kahal Kogin*, or "Congregation of Cochin," while the book of the Black Jews is spoken of as prepared for the several Holy Congregations * of the assembly of Jeshuran [inhabiting] Shingali.†

3. The dates of the synagogues of the Black Jews altogether antedate those of the White. Thus, the date on the mural slab of the now disused and dilapidated "Cochin Angadi" Synagogue, is A.D. 1344, = 563 years ago. That of the Kadavambagom Synagogue in Cochin is A.D. 1639, or = 268 years ago. That of the Cochin Theckumbagom Synagogue is A.D. 1586, or = 321 years ago; while that of the Synagogue of the White Jews is A.D. 1666, or = 241 years ago. Hence the institutions of the Black Jews are the more ancient.

4. The Tomb-stone dates of the Black Jews are also far more ancient that those of the White Jews. The earliest date of any tomb-stone of the White Jews is two

* Perhaps referring to the Seven Yogams, or "Seven Congregations," into which the "Black" Jews of Cochin are still divided.

† Shingali, as we have remarked in a foregoing article, is a well-known ancient name of Cranganore. (See Yule and Burnell's *Hobson-Jobson*. &c. We see that the Black Jews were at this period an independent community, with their own traditions; and no less keenly alert to get their song-book printed, directly they were in touch with western civilization, than were the White Jews. This is not the action of a depressed class, composed of slaves and half-castes.

hundred years old. That on a tomb-stone of the Black Jews is six hundred years old.* The White Jews' synagogue being two hundred and forty-one years old, and their earliest tombstone two hundred years old, it clearly follows that the White Jews came only in recent years.

5. In the public accounts, and other state records, the White Jews are described as *Paradesis* (or foreigners), and their synagogue as the *Paradesis'* synagogue.

6. A further proof of the comparatively recent erection of the White Jews' Synagogue than is afforded by the date on its mural slab alone, arises out of the known fact that for it the southern boundary wall of the compound of the Rajah's palace at Matancheri (at Cochin) had to be shifted, in order to provide a site for its erection. This is a proof that the community of the White Jews was a last-comer, and that all available space on the land at Cochin assigned by the Rajah to the Jews had already been taken up and occupied by the (so-called) Black Jews, so that the White Jews when they became sufficiently numerous to build a synagogue for themselves, had to sue to the Rajah for a fresh piece of ground. Hence they were not the original settlers †

* It has been suggested that there is a discrepancy between these early dates and the known historical date of the Jewish emigration to Cochin. It must be remembered that wholesale emigrations to new places are commonly preceded by earlier tentative settlements. The earliest tombstone, as far as the writer knows is to be found at Chennanmangalum. At this and similar places it is likely that there were branch settlements of Jews existing before the final desertion of Cranganore. At any rate, the dates on the synagogues and tombstones cannot be got rid of, and must be reckoned with.

† It is well known that the palace at Matancheri was built and presented to the Rajah by the Dutch on October 2nd, A. D. 1551. If therefore the White Jews should wish to explain the lateness of the date of their present synagogue by the contention that it is a new

7. Although now, in the Ernakulam and Cochin divisions only, it has become the habit in the *Nedoonchits** to designate Jews other than those of the White community as "Black," such was not the case until the post of Judge of the Zillah Court was held by a White Jew named Mosa Sargon, 80 years ago. He first introduced the practice. But elsewhere, *e.g.*, in the Parur and Chennanmangalum divisions, the custom does not prevail even now. Again, had the practice prevailed of old it would have occurred in the *teetoram* (or grant-deed) by which in 1711 the land in Ernakulam now occupied by the Black Jews was conveyed to them by the Rajah. But in this the words are, "We grant to our 64 Jews† of Naikar Kadavoo at Ernakulam, &c." The term "Black," if ever used of old, could only have had a technical meaning, as designating those acknowledged as a mixed class by *both* the M'yukhasim and the White Jews.

8. In the present *Record Book*‡ of the White Jews no mention whatever is made of Cranganore, which is inexplicable on the assumption that the White Jews ever lived there.

9. Had the White Jews ever lived in Parur or Chennanmangalum, as would seem to be implied by Day, Burnell, and others, their *Tarawads* (ancestral estates) and houses should be in existence. But such as these are never heard of. All the Jewish ancestral estates in those places belong to the so-called

---

one erected on the side of an older one, that theory is shut out by the fact of the date of the building of the place, the compound wall of which could not have been built in a place whence it had to be removed a hundred years later, had that ground been already occupied by a Jewish Synagogue.

* Receipts for Government Revenue.

† The term "sixty-four persons" is a well known term of respect in Malabar.

‡ Their *Dibrê Hayamim*. See foregoing note on the same.

"Black" Jews. In the absence of these belongings, we must understand the terms "White" and "Black" as applied to Jews outside Cochin to mean the M'yukhasim of the seven Yogams.*

10. The terms used by the Black Jews to designate their present synagogues are commemorative of the terms used to describe those in Cranganore. Thus, both in Cochin and in Ernakulam they have their, "*Kadavambagom*" and their "*Theckombagom*" synagogues. The former means "*River-side*" and the latter "*South-side*" synagogues. Neither of these terms has any significance as applied to the positions at present occupied by the synagogues in Cochin or Ernakulam. Their real reference is to the positions occupied by the earlier synagogues in Cranganore. But it is the Black Jews, not the White Jews, who thus designate their synagogues,—another indication that the Black Jews were at Cranganore, and that the White Jews were not.

11. A book by a Rabbi of Alexandria named Maharikash,† who died in A.D. 1610, deals with various casuistical questions propounded to him by Jews throughout the world. Amongst these questions for adjudication is one relating to the racial purity of certain Jews at Cochin. It is propounded by a M'yukhas of Calcutta (Calicut?). Maharikash remarks that it is not the first time that that question has been brought up for decision in regard to the Jews of Cochin. The salient point

* The Seven Yogams denote the seven congregations or parishes into which the Black Jews are now divided. These are, two at Cochin, two at Ernakulam, and one each at Parur, Chennanmangalum and Malah. They make up seven congregations in all (one, however, being just now in a state of schism), while the White Jews constitute an eighth and separate one.

† "Maharikash" is an acrostic abbreviation for Moharur Yakob Kastero. He was a Spanish Jew, of the family name of Castero. For his adjudication see further on. (Page 104.)

to be observed, however, is that in the whole discussion of the matter, there is not so much as an allusion to any White Jews in Cochin. Mention is made only of Jews that are M'yukhasim and Jews that are non-M'yukhasim. The mode of description could not have been adopted had the White Jews then formed a separate and a third community of Jews in Cochin, as they do now.*

12. In Cochin is an old and decayed synagogue, known as the "Cochin Angadi" synagogue. It is now disused. The freehold properties, however, belonging to it, are not in the enjoyment of the White Jews (as their claim to be the original settlers would require them to be), but are in the hands of the Black Jews.

13. A pronouncement upon the racial purity (from a Jewish religious point of view), of the Black Jews of Malabar was lately elicited from the Great Rabbi in Jerusalem,† whose, position in the Holy City naturally constitutes him an important ecclesiastical authority to the Jews throughout the world. He refers to the treatment of the subject by Maharikash nearly three hundred years ago, and gives it as his well-considered decision that the M'yukhasim among the Black Jews of Cochin are "equal in racial purity to any of the Jews throughout the world," and are really of the Jewish nation, in its fullest sense. The remaining ones (the non-M'yukhasim), can become so by having recourse to the appointed ceremonial bath, or baptism.‡

* See *Ohle Yakob*, Ch. XCIX., p. 149.

† The *Rabbi R'shon l'Zion (The First—i.e. Chief—Rabbi of Zion)* in the person of the late Rabbi Raphael Meyer Phanizal.

‡ The writer is informed on good authority that the decision was arrived at by the great Rabbi after most careful enquiry made of the White Jews of Cochin through the Jewish agency at Calcutta, who

14. The Black Jews are still the ones who make *use* of the privileges granted in the copper-plate charter. They still carry a silk umbrella and lamps lit at day-time when proceeding to their synagogue on the 8th day after birth of sons. They spread a cloth on the ground, and place ornaments of leaves across the road on occasions when their brides and bridegrooms go to get married, and use then drums, *cadanars*,* and trumpets. After the wedding is over, four silk sunshades, each supported on four poles, are borne, with lamps burning in front, as the bridal party goes home. The Black Jews say that the White Jews use none of these, and never have done so. The White Jews aver that they were accustomed formerly to use such privileges, but have discontinued them.

An Imaginary Parallel, drawn from the known circumstances of Jewish settlements in Bombay.

The above are some of the chief arguments on which the Black Jews of Cochin rely to prove their true origin. For additional light on the problem we can resort once more to the comparative method, and adduce the witness of analogies elsewhere. For example, in Bombay, in addition to the Bene-Israel, to whom the problem of colour attaches, and of whom we

in turn made enquiries of the White Jews of Cochin before submitting a report to the Great Rabbi. To make matters doubly assured the Rabbi sent to Cochin itself an agent, Abraham Asher HaLevy, who collected evidence, and went to Jerusalem and furnished the Great Rabbi with the information. As though to finally clench the matter, and to leave no manner of doubt as to the Great Rabbi's innermost mind on the question, it may be mentioned that only recently (*i. e.* in about 1903.) a member of the Black Jews' community (of course a M'yukhas, or 'Brown' Jew) went to Jerusalem, and brought back as his wife one of the relatives of the Great Rabbi himself.

* A *Cadanar* is a small mortar, which, when charged with gunpowder and fired, explodes with a loud report.

have already written so much in the foregoing pages, there is another community of Jews, white in colour, the arrival of whom dates within about the last one hundred years; and the advent of this white community of Jews in Bombay many centuries after an earlier community had settled in adjacent parts, forms a strict parallel to what must once have taken place in Cochin. The advent and growth of the present community of White Jews in Bombay coincides with the commencement and development of commerce in this city through the English, just as there is reason to believe that the origin of the White Jews in Cochin coincided with the commencement of European trade in Cochin through the Dutch (and possibly began in Portuguese times), and developed with its growth. The first (modern) Bagdadi Jew to settle in Bombay was Jacob Semah, who came from Bagdad 180 years ago, (*Jewish Year-Book*). To the modern Jews of Bagdad first settled in Bombay have been added numbers of White Jews from Egypt, Turkey, and numerous European countries besides, forming a modern Jewish community in Bombay of now probably more than 1500 souls. It is on record that when the Sassoon family first came to Bombay from Bagdad in the very early days of the White Jewish community in this city, the members of that family at first frequented the synagogues of the Bene-Israel community, and were indebted to them for the ministrations of their religion. As time proceeded, however, the large Sassoon Synagogue in the Byculla suburb was built, followed by another edifice in the Fort. Since such times the two communities have for the most part drawn apart, to worship in their respective synagogues, and there has remained no intimate bond between them. But neither has there been any breach of friendship, as has so unhappily been the case in Cochin; and

the two classes frequently co-operate in furtherance of schemes of education and the like. Now, it would be strange if at some future time some historian should arise to say that the White Jews of Byculla and of the Fort in Bombay, were the original Jewish settlers of Bombay, and that the Bene-Israel of Bombay are descended from their servants or converts! Yet, *mutatis mutandis*, has the case been so very differently stated in Cochin?*

A Wide Comparative Study is needed if the Hebrew Race-Problems of India are to be justly weighed.

It is not, then, as an isolated remnant, but as one scattered portion of a greater whole, that we are to judge of the race problems of the Malabar Jews and, indeed, of Indian Jews generally. And our survey must extend further afield than merely the Indian shores. On the one side of us, on Arabian Coasts, is the very large community of the Jews of Yemen; and further on still are the Jewish Falashas of Abyssinia. On the other side of us, in the very far east, is

* The protest which the Black Jews of Cochin make against the origin so assiduously sought to be fastened on them in certain quarters, is not one newly made. For example, we find them in 1839 making common cause with the White Jews in indignantly rebutting certain charges of Dr. Wolff. In a representation signed by sixteen persons, these words occur:—"The fact is that the Black Jews never were, or considered themselves to be, slaves to the White Jews, nor have they ever, in any one instance, paid any yearly tribute; nor are they in any manner bound to pay any small sums whatever to any one whatsoever for the privilege of circumcising their children, or being in Prayer allowed to wear frontlets (T'philim). They do not sit down in general or promiscuously with the White Jews, as a mark of distinction which is observed in every nation or sect from the lower classes towards those of a higher sphere of society; and being of separate congregations they never acknowledged the White Jews as masters to whom they were in any way in bondage, nor can Mr. Wolff produce more than one or two individuals among the Black Jews that have any property, or are, in their circumstances richer than the White Jews."—*Oriental Christian Spectator, September, 1839.*

the strange little remnant of ancient Jews at Kai-Fung-Fu in China; and history has it that there were also formerly many Jews in Ceylon. We have already treated of the Bene-Israel of Bombay. All the foregoing have their problems of colour. Are we to give of each of these the account which has so often and, as the writer believes, with so little foundation, been given of the "Black" Jews of Malabar? If so, what has become, in these *other* places mentioned, of the stock of White Jews from which the rest have sprung? In truth, we need to take more than a local view of these questions. The comparative study of the numerous scattered coloured communities of Jews which we have mentioned, obliges us to throw back our gaze into the vistas of the past, and to contemplate eras gone by, when even in hoary times of antiquity Israelite adventurers and merchants were already passing along the still well-known tracks of ancient maritime and land traffic; when individual Jewish merchants were in course of time followed by Jewish settlers, and Jewish settlers often grew into Jewish communities, and Jewish communities were wont to be swelled by bodies of Jewish refugees, now and then resorting to them in times of political persecution or overthrow elsewhere.

A Likely History of Jewish Communal Development in Malabar.

If we were asked to construct a theory to account for what has led up to the present position of things amongst the Jews of Malabar, it would not seem altogether difficult to do so. It is clear that there was first of all a time when, on first arrival, the Jews of the White section lived in concord and amity with their brethren of the older community, then already located in

Malabar, and for long previously enjoying the favour of the Rajahs of Cochin. Doubtless, too, by courtesy, the new-comers, on account of their hailing, many of them, from Europe, and standing well with the Dutch and other European traders, whose language they were able to speak, and on account also of their possessing, no doubt, higher Hebrew and Jewish learning, were gladly accorded a position of consensual priority. Samuel Castil, who dates from the palmy days of the Jewish State in Cranganore, and whose family name though that of Spanish Jews is classed with the Black Jews (amongst whom at Chennanmangalum the family graves of the Castil family still exist, although the name is not so much as known now amongst the White Jews in Cochin,), would seem to be a witness to a happy period such as the one described having once existed. At such a time it must have been that the copper-plate charters passed not unnaturally into the keeping of the White new-comers.* Then must have ensued a time of misunderstanding and a breach. The tradition which attributes this to a refusal on the part of the White Jews to intermarry with the M'yukhasim of the Black community is not unlikely to be true. Socially, of course, all men are free to marry or not to marry with whom they please, as far as race goes; but it must be remembered that the bar which has been interposed by the White Jews in the matter of intermarriage with the Black, is a *religious* one, and that an actual religious

* There seems no reason to suppose "accident" as the cause of this, as the Editor of the *Malabar Quarterly Review* says that the Black Jews maintain. Much less need is there to suppose that "stratagem" was employed for its abstraction, as Mr. Asher would suggest. (See his *Benjamin of Tudela*). The probability is that the White Jews became the custodians of these plates in the most ordinary and natural of ways, when they were at one with the Black community, and possessed their confidence; and once in their keeping they retained their hold upon them after the breach ensued.

disqualification on the part of any "Black" Jew, (so-called), whether M'yukhas or other, to marry with any Jew of the White section is created thereby; and thus the matter is placed outside the option of the individual. Whatever the cause has been, it has resulted in an inveterate animosity between the two classes, which still continues, leading to many complications, as, for example, to the discipline of the seven Yogams being upset by the White Jews, who have in late years granted a license of readership (in the synagogue) to one of the seven synagogues of the Black Jews, in a case where for certain reasons the Black Jews had withheld it.

There seems much need for a voice to say to the two contending parties, as was once said to two of their nation of old when engaged in heated struggle, "Sirs, ye are brethren."* What need that there should prevail the better principles of the religion of Israel's true Messiah, in Whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, but all one in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion of present Ethnological Enquiry.

The argument sought to be drawn from the absence of surnames amongst the Black Jews of Cochin cannot be considered to be of much weight. The Bene-Israel of Bombay have no real surnames either. Those which serve for such, as we have already pointed out at some length, are merely indicative of Indian villages in which the ancestors of the present holders of the surname have resided—*e. g.* "Kihimkar" = "resident of Kihim;" "Thalkar" = "inhabi-

* *Act Ap.* vii. 26. Comp. *Exodus* ii. 13.

† See Palestine Exploration Fund *Quarterly Statement* 1904, pp. 150 ff. 1905, pp. 48 ff.

tant of Thal ;" "Penkar" = "inhabitant of Pen ;" and the like. The villages are still well-known ones near Bombay. These surnames it is now the tendency among the Bene-Israel to drop. Whether the Jews of Yemen have real surnames or no, the writer has no certain information ; but has been given to understand that they have not. The universal use of surnames even amongst the English is not a matter of ancient history.

The conclusion arrived at, then, in the foregoing is, that the commonly called "Black" Jews of Cochin are sub-divisible into two widely-differing classes, one of which, the M'yukhasim of the seven Yogams, sometimes described as the "Brown" Jews, are the actual descendants of the original Jewish settlers of Crangnore. The present "White" Jews are comparatively recent arrivals. The term "Black," if it is to be applied to any Jews in Malabar at all, must be restricted to those who are acknowledged *both* by the White Jews *and* by the M'yukhasim of the seven Yogams to be of mixed origin.

NUMBERS AND LOCATION OF THE JEWS OF MALABAR.

The traveller who visits the Jews of Malabar will give it as his verdict that their lines are fallen to them in pleasant places. With the open sea to the west, and the beautiful backwater eastwards, and with the cocoanut groves over and around them, the Jews of Cochin are located on a spot which all admirers of nature must pronounce distinctly beautiful. Hardly less beautiful are the three or four other spots inhabited by the Malabar

Jews, situated as they are on the waterways of the country, either on the backwater itself, or on canals branching from it. The writer will not easily forget how at the close of his first visit to the Malabar Jews in 1895, after he had put off from Chennanmangalum (the last of their villages which he had been able to visit), in the boat which was to convey him up the backwater northwards towards the railway, a number of the Jews, acting on an afterthought, put off in their canoes and paddled hurriedly after him to ask copies of a pamphlet which had been written in regard to their history; and how, while they eagerly accepted the pamphlets they wanted, they as strenuously rejected tracts on the Messiah which were offered them with the former. The scene was one truly romantic, amidst its beautiful surroundings. And these were the so-called "Black Jews." Shall we, following R. Jacob HaCohen, whose words we have already quoted in a foot-note, rather term them M'yukhasim Jews of the "non-white" class?

Jews' Town, Cochin.

But to return to Cochin, and to take things a little in order. "Jew Town," part of a suburb named Matancheri, some two miles south of the British town of Cochin, and near a palace by the waterside where the Rajahs of Cochin are crowned, consists of one straight and narrow street, running north and south, and flanked on either side with quaint houses of solid build, many of which bespeak Dutch origin and style. At its northern end, near the Rajah's palace is situated the synagogue of the White Jews. The synagogue internally is remarkable for its handsome pavement of old Dutch tiles, and possesses many handsome articles of furniture. In the street mentioned dwell, often side by side, numerous families of the White and Black Jews. The

recognized head of the White Jews at the present time is Mr. Isaac Halegua, in whose keeping are the famous copper-plate charters. From this worthy gentleman the present writer during both his visits to Cochin (in 1895 and 1902), received the most unfailing kindness and courteous assistance; and although compelled to differ from him as to the verdict of history upon the controverted matter of the status of the Black Jews, nothing has transpired to weaken the cordial respect and gratitude felt personally towards him by the writer. Indeed, the memories of Cochin, whether as he moved amongst one or other of the different classes of Jews there (as he was able to do without anyone saying "Nay" to him), are fragrant to the writer with the recollections of all sorts of kind acts of friendship and courtesy extended by either side. One could only regret that those so generously disposed towards a common friend should be so much divided amongst each other.

The Feast of Tabernacles is kept with special *éclat* amongst the White Jews of Cochin, and during the former of his two visits to Cochin the writer was witness of some of its social festivities. The amount of jewellery displayed on the occasion, on the persons of the ladies, as well as the handsome apparel worn, was very striking.

Passing down the street of Jews' Town, southwards from the synagogue of the White Jews, we arrive, near the middle of the street, on its right hand, or westward side, at the Theckombagom Synagogue of the M'yukhasim Jews,—*i.e.*, of those Jews, who, as already explained, although classed amongst the "Black Jews" by most modern writers, and classed so also by the White Jews themselves, claim to be the representatives and true lineal descendants of the earliest

Jewish settlers of Malabar. We shall see that they have synagogues in other places besides.

At the southernmost end of the street is the "Kadavambagom" Synagogue, formerly also belonging to the M'yukhasim, but now in revolt against them, and frequented by the "mixed multitude" of the Non-M'yukhasim, subdivided as *Abadim (slaves), M'Shukhararim (manumitted i.e. emancipated,)* and others. Of old the Non-M'yukhasim were suffered (as in most places they still are), everywhere to frequent the synagogues of their M'yukhasim superiors, on submitting to certain small disqualifications imposed upon them, not as a mark of inferiority but to form a *geder (hedge)* or safeguard of the lineage.* In Cochin itself they were permitted to occupy the Kadavambagom Synagogue for their own use, under sufferance of the M'yukhasim, the latter holding the right of appointment of its *Chazan* or reader, for which privilege a certain *puttam*, or due, was customarily paid to the M'yukhasim. It has long been the way of the White Jews to class the M'yukhasim and Non-M'yukhasim together under one common apellation of "Black Jews," and to ignore any inner distinction between the two classes. Lately the "mixed multitude" of the Kadavambagom Synagogue, making common cause with the White Jews against the M'yukhasim, obtained from the White Jews license for one of their own number to fill the post of reader, and that, too, without payment of the customary tax to the M'yukhasim. When the M'yukhasim sought to regain at law possession of their former

* The disabilities imposed upon them are three in number, and relate to (1) the *chaznuth* or readership of the Synagogue; (2) the *n'sauth* or eldership; and (3) the first place of precedence amongst seven persons in the reading of the law. None of these privileges can be held by a Non-M'yukhas.

synagogue, they found the matter "barred by limitation," or disuser, and themselves deprived of the Kadavambagom Synagogue in Cochin, which now remains permanently alienated from them, so that what were formerly seven Yogams, or congregations, of the M'yukhasim have now became six.* They have had to content themselves with excommunicating the adherents of the unruly synagogue. Elsewhere, outside of Cochin, the Non-M'yukhasim live, as formerly, peaceably with their superiors the M'yukhasim, frequenting their synagogues, and complying with the customary restrictions imposed upon them.

The Town of Ernakulam.

To leave for awhile the atmosphere of quarrels, and to pass into freer and calmer air, we will now cross the two miles of backwater, which a steam ferry, plying to and fro to a wharf near Jew Town, gives us an easy opportunity of doing, and alight at the town of Ernakulam, opposite to Cochin eastwards, where are the State offices, and educational institutions, and what not besides, of the State of the Rajah of Cochin. Here, moreover, on one side of the town, to the northwards, on land which was granted for the purpose in

* The communal constitution of the M'yukhasim, was made up of a confederation of the seven congregations or parishes (called *yogams*), which acted in concert, and regulated all matters relating to the community. These seven *yogams* comprised the whole of the Black Jews, and were made up as follows:—

Two Synagogues (Theckombagom and Kadavabagom) in Cochin.
Two " " " " in Ernakulam.
One Synagogue in Parur.
One " Chennanmangalum.
One " Malah.

The meaning and application of the terms "Kadavambagom" (river-side) and "Theckombagom" (southern side) in their reference to the ancient Cranganore, have been given already.

1711, is another settlement of the Jews. Here are no longer any "White" Jews, who are a peculiarity of Cochin alone. The Jewish settlement, again, as in Cochin, consists chiefly of one main street, running this time east and west, its western extremity running down to the edge of the backwater. Numerous Jewish shops are here in evidence all along the street. There are many dealers in poultry, and in fish and in rice, as well as in abundant commodities besides. The Jews are said to monopolize largely the trade in poultry. Here the Jews have two synagogues, one on either side of the street, this time the undisputed and undisturbed possession of the M'yukhasim. As in Cochin, these synagogues are called by the names descending from earlier synagogues in Cranganore, respectively "Theckombagom" and "Kadavambagom."

The Vicinity of the Ancient Cranganore.

Leaving now the neighbourhood of Cochin, we proceed northwards to visit three other spots, more or less in the vicinity of the site of the ancient Cranganore, inhabited by the Bene-Israel, and named respectively Parur, Chennanmangalum, and Malah. To reach these we have to proceed some eighteen miles in a boat by backwater.

Parur.

Parur, by a curious overlapping of territories, is a town belonging to the Travancore State, most of which State is situated to the south of Cochin. The Jewish community here possesses a synagogue, and the site of a still older one is marked by a piece of masonry, in an alcove of which a lamp with a small wick is often kept burning. They say it marks the *heckal*

or sanctuary, of an old synagogue of 400 years ago. They also narrate that of old there were in this place eighteen Beth-Midrashes, and 505 Jewish houses, all situated near the Government offices, and that formerly all the surrounding houses belonged to the Jews. The writer was struck by the comparatively great fairness of the countenance of the Jews here, despite their coming under the category of the so-called Black Jews.

Chennanmangalum.

From Parur it is but a short journey by boat to Chennanmangalum. This place with a terribly long name is sometimes designated Chenotta, and Chennum; and it is as the latter that we shall write of it ourselves. Here, then, at Chennum the Jews inhabit a spot close to the water's edge. Their present synagogue has succeeded several others, which have been successively burnt down, the disasters being responsible for the destruction of some of their important communal records which were kept there, and which, if preserved, might have been of important historical value. The writer was taken to visit an old cemetery, in a retired spot at the foot of a knoll, and a good deal overgrown with the jungle shrubs, where some very old gravestones were shown him; one gravestone, which has been rooted up or broken off, is kept within the synagogue precincts, and has already been quoted in evidence in the foregoing pages.

Malah.

At Malah, when visited, the synagogue was in a somewhat dilapidated state, but it was about to undergo repair.

is to be obtained. Those in the possession of the two different classes of the Jews, the Black and the White, do not agree together.

THE ADJUDICATION OF RABBI MAHARIKASH.

Before quitting our survey of the Jews at Cochin, it will, however, be worth while to extract from a work of the Rabbi Maharikash* (to whom allusion has already been made) a passage which, because of its early date, is of special interest in its bearing upon the controversy which still divides the Jews of Cochin. It also bears upon the ethnological points already discussed, and yet to be discussed. The strife revealed in it is very much the same as the one at the present day; but the actors in it are different. In it there is no mention of "White" and "Black Jews"; but only of M'yukhasim and Non-M'yukhasim. Those who are now called White Jews, if they had begun to arrive at all, must have been at the time but few in number, and content to assimilate with the already settled M'yukhasim; though it has suited them since to repudiate the latter, and to class them as one with the Non-M'yukhasim, under the general and rather opprobrious title of "Black Jews." The passage is of interest as showing how the case stood at the time it was written. As R. Maharikash died in 1610, the passage cannot be later than quite the beginning of the seventeenth century. The question as put by a M'yukhas named R. Moses, of Calcutta (Calicut?) is, in general, as follows:—

* As before mentioned, his name in full is, Rabbi Moharur Jacob de Castero. He lived in Egypt, and died there, in Alexandria, in A. D. 1610. He was author (amongst other works) of a treatise named "Oh'le Yakob," or "Tents of Jacob," a book of ritual decisions. An edition of it was published in Leghorn in 1783. (See page 87.)

"A question from India, from the Island of Cochin where there are about 900 heads of houses; 100 of them are genuine Jews, from the original stock, possessed of a root (or lineage); and the remainder are the offspring of female slaves; and they are opulent and religiously and charitably disposed. But the M'yukhasim (*i. e.*, the 100 genuine ones), do not intermarry with these, but term them slaves; and there are strifes and contentions amongst them without end about this. And these opulent ones, who by the others are termed slaves, are again subdivided as concerns their origin. Some of them are descendants of Jewish merchants who came to Malabar from Togarmah (Turkey), from Aden and Arabia Felix (Yeman or Terman), and from El Hajam (Persia). These purchased female slaves, and begat sons and daughters, of whom some were emancipated, out of the good pleasure of their masters; and others were left as they were, when their lords departed; the master, in his haste of leaving, or for other reasons, not previously performing the act of manumission. And another class were the slaves emancipated after the death of the owners (as a matter of course, the owners having died). Some got their freedom through the Government of the country (Cochin), which enacts that a female slave bearing children to her master becomes *ipso facto* free, and her children, too. Another class are the slaves of the present M'yukhasim Jews, of whom some have formally undergone the Rabbinic *tabila* (or baptism), for the purpose of manumission. There were also some who were pure Gentiles, of whom some were converted and others not. And they have became a very great community, rich and influential; and the M'yukhasim Jews are only a small body, few and feeble, and they regard the others as the descendants of slaves. But there is no one here capable of definitely pronouncing whether they are slaves or not. But it appears pretty clear that none of them can have received a proper legal bill of emancipation according to Rabbinic prescription, since there has been no one here sufficiently versed in the ritual of those laws to grant it. So how is the remedy to be found?"

The general purport of the answer and decision of Maharikash is to the effect that amongst the manuscripts of some

great Rabbi he had met with the same question, asked previously by the same persons, from the same country. That from it, and from what he had learned from his great Rabbi, he had arrived at the decision which he was now about to give. He quotes authorities from the Talmud, and from many Rabbis; and decides that since it is clear that there were at the necessary time no persons sufficiently learned in the proper rabbinical ritual to conduct the *sharur*, or *bond of manumission* in the appointed manner, and consequently these persons had not undergone the prescribed lavation, that they should now undergo the rabbinical immersion before proper witnesses, and that after it they are to be esteemed perfect Jews in every sense of the word; and that afterwards one even so holy as a priest himself can be married to their females without let or hindrance.

It is this decision which, as has been already said, the late chief Rabbi of Jerusalem (the Rabbi Rishon l'Zion), Rabbi Phanizal by name, relied largely upon (though he supported it by independent investigations also) in his recent endeavours, in answer to an appeal made to him, to bring about a reconciliation between the contending parties.

IV.

FURTHER ETHNOLOGICAL QUESTIONS,

AS THEY AFFECT THE BENE-ISRAEL, IN COMMON WITH OTHER JEWS.

IN approaching the question now to be handled, it must be stated at the outset that to a Christian it appears incredible that any mere questions of colour or race should be associated

with ideas of fancied superiority or inferiority, either social or religious, in any man. In the words of the New Testament, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."* Man's worth becomes what he has intrinsically come to be himself, religiously, socially, intellectually; and turns nowise on the question of colour or race. In God's sight, and in that of His true followers, all men are equal. The person of colour may as often as not outshine his fairer brother in virtue and ability—there is no reason why not—and as such is to be proportionally esteemed and honoured. It is impossible for real Christians to share the feelings which are felt so acutely by some on these points, and by means of which so many are divided; and it is wholly apart from such that we approach our subject now.

The Bene-Israel and "Racial Purity."

It is probably correct to say that the Bene-Israel are possessed of a distinct type of countenance and physical build of their own, and we have said already that we think the older class of Jews in Cochin (the M'yukhasim, of the so-called "Black" class) resemble them in this. No doubt modes of dress, habits of wearing a beard or otherwise, of retaining side-locks, and the like, go a good way towards making identification easy, or the reverse, in the case of any race. But the writer fully coincides with a testimony once borne by an acquaintance now no longer living,† a district officer of great experience, who once wrote to him that in his opinion

* Act. Ap. XVII, 26.

† The late W. F. Sinclair, Esq., of the Bombay Civil Service, and or long Collector of Kolaba, in the Konkan.

both the Bene-Israel and the *Kálá* Israel* possessed the typical Hebrew face. He added, that, with one exception, he could not remember during the twenty-two years he had been amongst the Bene-Israel, anyone whom he had any difficulty in identifying. He moreover wrote that he himself had never been able to see any difficulty in their claim to Israelite descent, and quoted the testimony of Benjamin of Tudela as to the "Jews" of Arabia, as being to the point in the matter.

But the further question remains, *If* a Hebrew type, still *what* Hebrew type?—for vast differences can exist even here. For example, such a marked feature as an aquiline nose, the writer does not remember meeting with amongst the Bene-Israel. Straight finely-shaped noses, neither aquiline nor Assyroid, might be said to be the usually prevailing sort. Again, straight and elongated features generally strike the unscientific observer as a distinguishing mark; and, while commonly rather below average height, the Bene-Israel are apt to be, the majority of them, thin and wiry in structure. On the other hand, plenty of examples occur of individuals tall of stature and of substantial build, and possessed of faces that are fairly rotund. As to complexion, it is right to say that the Bene-Israel rank, as a rule, amongst the very fairest of the Indian castes around them, with the exception only of the Parsees. In general, those whose avocations keep them employed in shops and houses and offices, largely free from exposure to the sun and heat, tend to become fairer than others. Thus, for the most part the women engaged in

* *Kálá* means *black*, and this title is given by the Bene-Israel themselves to those of their number whom they recognize as of mixed origin.

domestic pursuits, and especially the infants, are, as a class, peculiarly fair. Those engaged in field occupations, whether men or women, tend to become for the time being much darker in hue, and often are hardly distinguishable from the colour of the agricultural classes around them. Sometimes, however, one will be almost startled by meeting in some out-of-the-way village an individual of the Bene-Israel so exceedingly fair in complexion as to make it almost necessary to believe that he must be some Persian, recently arrived from the midst of the fairest of the modern Persians in Persia itself. Faces oval in form, with good foreheads, seem to be the commonest ones amongst the girls and young women, but such contour of face remains less marked after they are grown up. Those who hold that the chief characterizing mark of the true Hebrew is to be sought for rather in the eye* than in the shape of the nose, will be interested to learn that the Bene-Israel are almost without exception possessed of eyes that are dark, and which are often piercing in appearance besides.

Whether freedom from admixture with Indian blood can be rightly claimed by the Bene-Israel is a more than doubtful question. While ready to express his views only with diffidence, the writer confesses that in his opinion,—and in his opinion he is confirmed by the best of experienced observers,—the theory of entire absence of intermixture cannot possibly be maintained. Appearances are decidedly against it. Moreover, historically considered, the thing is not likely. If the Bene-Israel are to be held to have parted from the main body of their people in such early times as we imagine them to have done, the wonder will not have been that there should have been some intermixture, but

* This opinion was advanced by Colonel Waters, of the Indian Medical Service, in a Lecture given by him in Bombay.

that there should have been an absence of it. All the sentiment that has grown up around the matter in later times, partly as the product of rabbinical teaching and legislation in regard to it, would have been in earlier times unknown and unfelt. The Israelite descent would have been considered to have been sufficiently preserved through the father. Such a passage as Deut. xxi. 10-14, or such an example as that of Ruth the Moabitess, would have been a far more true key to the principles of practice of ancient times than the later prescriptions of the *Talmud*. Of one thing, however, we have no doubt in our minds at all—that for long periods past, probably from long centuries gone by, whether owing to the example of the Indian caste system around them, or from whatever reason, the Bene-Israel have been a self-contained community, intermarrying only amongst its own members, and outbanning and classing as *Kala Israel* (= *Black Israel*) any that did otherwise.

The Claim of Coloured Jewish Communities to "Purity" of Jewish Descent. What is "Purity of Jewish Descent"?

The point is one upon which the Bene-Israel themselves feel very keenly indeed; and the more so because their co-religionists of other Jewish communities have oftentimes been apt without due investigation of the matter to hold aloof from them, and to regard them as cast under a certain slur of religious disability from a Jewish orthodox point of view, and this not merely on the ground of religious laxity, but also on the score of their mixed blood. Especially do the Bene-Israel resent a statement made in the *Bombay Gazetteer* to the effect that the early Bene-Israelite immigrants almost certainly married

with the women of the country.* And yet the matter is surely incontrovertible?

The subject is one where much has to be considered on all its sides; and the problem reaches to other Jewish communities besides that of the Bene-Israel. It extends, for example, to the community of Jews in Abyssinia, known as the Falashas; to the Jews of Yemen (whom Dr. Wilson believed to be "descendants of the original stock of Abraham and the Arabian proselytes"); and also it touches in large measure the Jews of Cochin, mentioned in the foregoing pages, concerning whom Rabbi D'Beth Hillel writes that, "persons of one class have intermarried with families of the other three classes,"—two of which classes we have already shown to be of mixed origin, and in some cases to consist of proselytes of apparently entirely gentile origin. It touches no less the remnant of Jews in China (see portraits lately published in the *Jewish Chronicle*).

Talmudic Views on the subject more rigid than earlier Jewish ones.

There is no doubt that since the dawn of Talmudic times, *i.e.*, more or less throughout all the years of the Christian era (for the principles embodied in the Talmud held sway for a considerable while before they were formulated into a written work†), a much stronger aversion has existed amongst the Jews

* "Of the history of the Bene-Israel in Kolàba nothing is known. They would seem to have lived quietly both under Hindu and Musalmàn rulers; like other immigrants almost certainly marrying with the women of the country, to a great extent losing the knowledge of their special history and religion and adopting the belief and practices of the people around them."—*Bombay Gazetteer (Poona)*. Vol. XVIII. Part I., page 507.

† The Talmud is held to have assumed its final form in the sixth century.

to marriage unions with Gentiles than was the case earlier. The Rabbi Leo Modena of Venice,* writing in 1637, says that the Jews hold that intercourse with a woman not a Jewess was forbidden them by Ezra (presumably on the authority of Ezra ix. 12). We need not suppose that the Jews of Ezra's own time would have understood this command to include *all* gentile women; but it has doubtless been developed by latter Talmudic and Rabbinic exposition to mean no less.

The Paris Sanhedrim on the Subject.

Even such a latitudinarian body as the Jews of the Paris Sanhedrim assembled by the first Napoleon, whose primary aim it was if possible to ingratiate that Emperor, found it their wisdom to defer to this consensus of opinion amongst the later Jews. Napoleon, propounded to them the question: "Can a Jewess marry a Christian and a Jew a Christian woman? or does the law allow the Jews to intermarry only amongst themselves?" After replying that "The law does not say that a Jewess cannot marry a Christian, nor a Jew a Christian woman; nor does it state that the Jews can only intermarry amongst themselves," and that "the prohibition in general applies only to nations in idolatry, etc.," the assembly go on to state, "We cannot dissemble that the opinion of the Rabbis is against these marriages (between Christians and Jews)," and they urge as the reason that without both parties being Jewish in faith the religious ceremonies required by the

---

* Leo Modena's *History of the Rites, Customs and Manner of Life of the present Jews throughout the World.* Translated from the Italian, London, 1650. page 168.

Talmud cannot be validly performed.* Thus, for even the liberal-minded Paris Jewish Sanhedrim. Those who are acquainted with the generally-prevailing spirit of severity towards Gentiles that characterizes the *Talmud*, and know that, in spite of modern efforts to make it speak otherwise, it classes even Christians with idolators, will not need many words to convince them of how totally inadmissable the *Talmud* would regard any approach to marriage with Gentiles on the part of Jews.

Indian Jews probably date back behind Talmudic times.

But in dealing with ancient communities of Jews such as those now before us, it is extremely doubtful whether we are in touch with Talmudic times at all. So early did these ancient colonizers separate from the parent stock, and in times of such dim antiquity did they apparently first of all begin their journeys to, and form their settlements in, the lands of their adoption, that it is more than possible that they were uninfluenced, at least till far later times, by Talmudic standards and codes of action altogether.† It is perfectly clear from

* *Transactions of the Paris Sanhedrim*, pages 154, 155 During the discussion on this subject, one of the Rabbis present expressed his belief that marriages with Christians were forbidden "He requested the assembly to consider that when Moses forbade those unions with the proscribed nations, he gave as the motive of this prohibition, the fear and apprehension, lest, by the seduction of women, men should be led astray from the law of the God in Whose name he spoke; that, consequently, the probability of seduction still existing in unions with other nations the prohibition still existed likewise." Another Rabbi said that "marriage is a religious act, and that the persons united in wedlock, must be of the same religion." *Id.*, pages 144, 145.

† Mr. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar (See his *Sketch of the History of Bene-Israel*, pages 4 and 13, etc.,) has sought to show that many of the traditional rites and observances of the Bene-Israel bear traces of origin in what he calls Mishnaic times, meaning the times immediately preceding the Christian era, which are treated of as *history* by the

such a passage as Deut. xxi. 10-14, what was permitted to Jews by the Law of old, so much so that even in Talmudic times, in spite of the tendency we have spoken of on the part of modern Rabbinic Judaism to discountenance all such connections with Gentiles, the liberty has been felt too clear to be specifically ignored, and so has been re-enforced as an affirmative precept in the famous "Six Hundred and Thirteen Precepts*;" while Josephus (Antiq. IV. viii. 23) is no less explicit as to the significance of the passage.† In the case of a marriage like that of Ruth the Moabitess with Boaz, the purity of Jewish lineage was considered to be fully secured to the offspring through the father.

Mishna The Mishna forms the first and earlier portion of the Talmud, and is believed to have been reduced to writing during the 2nd century. Of it Major Conder, writing in the *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund (Jan., 1894), says:—

"The Mishna is the Rabbinical comment on the Law, a work divided into six orders (Seeds, Feasts, Women, Damages, Holy Things, and Purifications), including 63 tracts in all . .. The work as a whole is a dry digest of the decisions of famous Rabbis on cases connected with the subjects above-named, but *the incidental notices include most valuable accounts of Jewish customs during the time when Herod's Temple was still standing* [the italics are ours), taken from remembrances of the earlier Rabbis who survived its fall, and notices of Jewish practices, occupations and manners during the time when the Sanhedrim sat at Jamnia and finally at Tiberias."

*See Precepts 532-534.

†From Deut. xxiii. 3-8 we may infer that, with the exception of the specially interdicted race of the Canaanites, the permissibility of intermarriage with foreigners was fully recognized. In the case of a foreigner marrying a woman of Israel it was evidently required that he should be a proselyte and one admitted to naturalization as an Israelite; but in the case of an Israelite marrying a foreign woman it does not appear to have been necessarily required that she should first have adopted the faith of Israel. With the Ammonites and Moabites, who could never become naturalized Israelites, (Deut. xxiii. 3) such unions were therefore unable to take place, except in the wife being the foreigner; but in the case of the Egyptians and Edomites, in the third generation of proselytism the man became habilitated as a naturalized Israelite, and could marry an Israelite woman. (See *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, under heading "*Marriage*").

We have, then, to disabuse our minds of suppositions of what the Jews would probably have done in Talmudic times, and to consider how they were likely to act in the matter in times before Talmudic principles bore sway. If, in the varying experiences of these very early Jewish colonizers whose case we are considering, whether they settled in Arabia, Africa, or on Indian shores, opportunities presented themselves, whether through the prevailing practice of purchasing slave-girls, or by other means, of forming alliances with gentile women, there is no reason to suppose that the practice would have been abjured, or that it would have been held afterwards to impose serious disqualifications upon the offspring of such unions after they had taken place. That concubinage with gentile slave-women was of common practice amongst the early Jews of Cochin seems to be plainly the opinion of the author of *Mashbith Milkhamoth*,* and he implies that the offspring resulting from such unions were oftentimes themselves, after being first manumitted, habilitated in the rights and privileges of Jews.

High authorities on ethnological matters tell us that in the case of such a community as the Bene-Israel it is impossible not to suppose that there has taken place, at some period or another, an intermixture of Indian and Israelitish blood. To the non-expert it does not seem difficult to suppose that mere difference of colour may be explained as due to the accident of a long residence in a tropical climate, as, for instance, it is chiefly accounted for by Mr. Haeem Samuel

* A book written in Hebrew by Hayim Jacob HaCohen, the title of which we have elsewhere translated into English as *The Assuager of Battles*. (It is the phrase translated in Ps. xlvi. 9, "*He that maketh wars to cease.*") Cracow, 1889.

Kehimkar.‡ Experts on the other hand, regard both colour and physiognomy as alike testifying to the certain fact of past intermixture. At the same time, no less does the Bene-Israel physiognomy, whatever it does besides, testify to the undeniable Jewish extraction of its possessors, and to the presence of the Jewish stamina. One is again and again absolutely struck with surprise at the fairness of complexion and unmistakable Jewish contour of countenance, of which one is constantly coming across examples amongst the Bene-Israel, and which arrest one's attention the more because these instances occur amongst a people who in their dress and modes of life are not sharply divided off from the other people of the country they inhabit. We ourselves are not competent to take upon us the decision of such a question as the one we have dealt with above; we can but point out what is urged on either side. But we wish to ask one question in connection with the point we have handled. On the supposition (which we cannot doubt) that the experts are right, and that such intermixtures as we have spoken of have taken place, we ask, Are Israelite communities like the Bene-Israel unique in this experience? Have not infiltrations of non-Jewish blood affected and modified in the course of many centuries, however insensibly,

‡ In somewhat rhetorical language, Mr. Haeem Samuel writes:—"The sudden degradation of the Bene-Israel from the happy lot they enjoyed at home to a state of utter destitution caused by the shipwreck, the removal of their residence from a cool province like Palestine, to the hot regions of India, the deterioration from their high mode of living in their mother-country to that of the poorest one in the Konkan, the change in their food from dainties to dry morsels, the removal from palatial buildings to wretched huts, the alteration in their dress from scarlet and crimson to rough country-made clothes, and the uneasiness caused by the dread of being killed or persecuted in a strange land, all these tended to mar the beauty of their skin and hair."—*A Sketch of the History of Bene-Israel*, pages 18 and 19.

more or less *all* Jewish communities in *all* parts of the world? One must hear ethnologists on the one point as much as on the other, and their verdict is that it has been so. If, in a city of mixed Jewish population like Jerusalem when we meet with a *congerie* of Jews from well-nigh all parts of the world, we are able with comparative precision to mentally assign to each the region of the world from which he has come, what is it that enables us to do so? Is it only the peculiarity of costume, or past effects of climatic influence, or the language spoken, that provides us with the data upon which we mentally proceed? Is it not also, in some degree, due to the further fact, if we only knew it, that centuries of residence in a particular country, have, in addition to the accidental influences of climate and changed habits of life, not been without their deeper effects in actually modifying, however subtly, the Jewish blood by occasional infiltrations from without, hereby tending yet further to impress a distinct local character on the example we study?

The Question Judged by Ancient Jewish Criteria.

The question, then, which so keenly and anxiously exercises the minds of our friends of the Bene-Israel community seems to us in reality to hinge upon the consideration of what actually *constitutes* "purity" or "impurity" of Israelite descent. The question, we know, is regarded by the Jews as a directly religious, and not a merely social or ethnological one; and as a religious one we have tried to regard it. But if what we have drawn attention to above, as being the *older* Jewish view, be correct, and the matter be practically foreclosed by the universal Jewish custom of reckoning descent through the father only, then it appears to us that the question is at once

dispossessed of any real importance, and resolves itself into the merely commonplace and interesting one of what actually took place, if that be discoverable. According, then, to *old* Jewish criteria it appears to us that, under any supposition, nothing has necessarily occurred to vitiate the claims of the Bene-Israel to be racially true Israelites.

Such Intermixtures long abjured amongst the Bene-Israel.

But once again. Whatever may have taken place in comparatively remote times, it seems clear that no such intermixture as that spoken of above, can have occurred for, at any rate, a very long time past. The Bene-Israel have now the very strongest abhorrence of such connections; and where they take place, those born as the result of them are treated as little better than outcasts. In fact the Bene-Israel have (as we have already stated) amongst them a class whom they themselves term "Black" *(kála)*; and the epithet refers not to the colour of those to whom it is given, but to the fact of their being born from dark-skinned (native) mothers. It denotes those who are the offspring of Bene-Israelite fathers by native mistresses. Such are carefully segregated from the Israelite body proper.* Though they are granted access to the synagogues and to communal feasts, they are not allowed to eat from the same dish with members of the community, and intermarriage with them is strictly forbidden. The custom is no new one, and, considering the ways of the conservative East, is more likely than not to denote the consistent practice of long centuries—although, at the same time, the tendency of everything in India to run into caste exclusiveness may

* Such can intermarry amongst themselves only.

in its time have borne its part in shaping such a custom. Again, with regard to the Jews of Arabia Felix, although Dr. Wilson has stated it as his opinion that when they established themselves in Yemen by conquest they intermixed by marriage with the maidens they saved alive and proselytized, he adds that "intermarriages with the natives of Arabia, it is understood, have not been practised by them for many hundred years." *

The supposition that at certain times alliances, matrimonial and others, may have taken place between Israelite men and gentile Indian women does not require us to suppose that no Hebrew women came to these shores originally. On the contrary, there is every reason to conclude that early Israelitish immigrants must have included women as well as men. Mr. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar† would argue this from the mere fact of the scrupulosity and jealousy evinced by the Bene-Israel women in the custodianship of Israelite practices and customs. A large number of domestic usages and religious customs have descended amongst the Bene-Israel dating from times immemorial, which are distinctly Hebrew in origin, though some of them date apparently from pre-Talmudic times;‡ and

* *Lands of the Bible*, Vol. II. page 660.

† *A Sketch of the History of Bene-Israel*, p. 13.

‡ "The distinction between the real descendants of Israel and those of alien women was rigidly observed by them according to the ordinances of Ezra and Nehemiah. They did not dine nor intermarry with them. Their ignorance of the Feast of Dedication and of the destruction of the Second Temple, the prevalence in their midst of all the rites and ceremonies observed in Mishnaic times, and their way of making offerings with frankincense, go to prove that the ancestors of the Bene-Israel must have come to India about two centuries before the Christian era."—*A Sketch of the History of Bene-Israel*, p. 13.

We have thought it only right and fair to quote Mr. Haeem Samuel's own words in full: but it will be observed that the scope of Ezra's injunction has been regarded by us in this paper as open to a different mode of interpretation.

of these the most jealous guardians are the housewives of the Bene-Israel, who always keep their husbands up to the mark as to the seasons and customs to be observed, and as to the *minutiæ* of their observance. Such accuracy and punctiliousness, Mr. Haeem Samuel reasons, could never have been engrafted originally on alien women by the male colonists unaided, but must have been handed on by, and copied from, the Israelitish women who came originally with the early Hebrew settlers, and who by their example and precept 'set' (so to speak) the practices since preserved.

Conclusion.

How greatly does the consideration of a subject like the above intensify in the heart of the Christian reader the desire that Israel may find the true Messiah, and in His New Covenant discover their true birthright and inalienable heritage, —where racial distinctions avail little—where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but the Messiah is all and in all! * No less, must it arouse in his mind gratitude for the grace and truth which has come by Jesus the Messiah,† and which has furnished a power enabling mankind to rise above the defective standards temporarily permitted by the Old Testament to man in the days of his moral enfeeblement, so that now polygamy and concubinage have received their stern prohibition, and God's original design when He made man male and female (*i. e.* as explained by implication in the New Testament, *in pairs*—one man for one woman ‡) has been restored, and carried to its highest ideal in the sanctity of the Christian marriage-bond.

* Col. iii. 11.
† S. John i. 17.
‡ S. Matt. xix. 4-8; Gen. i. 27: v. 2.

APPENDIX I.

Numbers and Distribution of the Jews of India.

TOTAL JEWISH POPULATION OF INDIA.

The following is a summary of the Jewish Population of India, according to the census returns of 1881, 1891, and 1901 respectively:—

British Territory.

Name of Province.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Bengal	1,059	1,447	1,939
Bombay Presidency	9,023	12,465	12,928
Burmah	204	351	685
Madras Presidency	30	42	45
Other Provinces	292	364	251
Total, Provinces ...	10,608	14,669	15,848

Feudatories.

Name of State or Agency.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Bombay States	...	1,082	991
Cochin States	1,249	1,142	1,137
Travancore	97	125	151
Other States	86	176	101
Total, States ...	1,432	2,525	2,380
Total, India ...	12,040	17,194	18,228

THE JEWS OF THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.

It will be seen from the foregoing that it is in the Presidency of Bombay that by far the larger portion of the Jewish population of India is located.

The 13,919 Jews of the Bombay Presidency are, first of all, distributed over four chief areas as follows :—

1.	British Territory, Presidency Proper ...	9,441
2.	„ „ Sind...	428
3.	Feudatory States...	991
4.	Aden	3,059
	Total...	13,919

1. The Bombay Presidency Proper—The following gives the Jewish population of each Zillah or District, as shown by the census enumerations of 1881, 1891 and 1901, respectively :—

Name of District.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Bombay City	3,321	5,021	5,357
Ahmedábád...	233	207	256
Kaira	7	9	12
Panch Maháls	7	...	2
Broach	18	23	16
Surat	61	39	9
Thána	892	386	314
Kolába	2,139	2,422	2,268
Ratnágiri	1	...	2
Kánara	25	12	11
Khandesh	88	99	127
Násik	101	108	100
Ahmednagar	65	39	20
Poona	619	930	801
Sholápur	94	20	5
Sátára	21	82	33
Belgaum	89*	...	2
Dhárwár	18	27	106
Bijápur	...	8	...
Total...	7,799	9,429	9,441

* The fact that a certain Station will sometimes show a number

2. SIND.—The Jewish population of Sind, it may be noted, is mainly concentrated in the city of Karàchi. The following Table gives the Jewish population of each District according to the census enumerations of 1881, 1891 and 1901, respectively:—

Name of District.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Karàchi	106	147	381
Hyderàbàd	31	32	10
Shikàrpur	9	27	31
Thar and Pàrkar	4	... ...	6
Upper Sind Frontier... ...	3	4	...
Total ...	153	210	428

3. ADEN.—The numbers of the Jews of Aden according to the Government Census of 1901 are as follows:—

Aden Municipality	2910
Do. Cantonment	32
Perim Island	9
Shekh Osman Suburb...	108
Total, Aden, ...	3,059

4. FEUDATORY STATES.—The following Table gives the Jewish population of each State in 1881, 1891 and 1901, respectively. It will be observed that the Janjira and Bhor States con-

of Jews present at one census while at a future one they are absent, may sometimes be accounted for by the fact that the Jews were Ben-Israelite soldiers in a regiment, which, at the time of one census, was stationed at one place, and, at the time of another, was removed elsewhere.

tain the largest numbers of Jews in this Table. They are both contiguous to the Kolaba District, which is the original historic home of the Bene-Israel community, and the Jewish population inhabiting these states may be taken as an extension of that of Kolaba.

Name of State.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Catch	19	47	15
Pàlanpur	1	34	34
Mahi Kàntha	5	4	9
Kàthiàwár	145	105	71
Rewa Kàntha	...	6	...
Surat Agency	7	6	11
Janjira	590	599	566
Satara Agency, Bhor State...	299	271	284
Do. (other Jaghirs).	...	4	1
Kolhàpur ... . Southern Maràtha Jaghirs ...	5	6	...
Total ...	1,071	1,082	991

DETAILS OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF A PORTION OF THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.

The following Tables shew the distribution of Jews in the Talukas or Sub-divisions of the three Zillahs or Districts—those of Kolaba, Poona and Thana—in which the Bene-Israel are found dwelling in the largest numbers of any portion of the Bombay Presidency, outside of the city of Bombay ; and also their distribution in the different Wards or Municipal districts of the Bombay City:—

Kolaba District.

Names of Taluka, or Sub-division.	Jewish Population, 1891.	Jewish Population, 1901.
Alibàg	790	726
Màngaon	85	74
Roha	413	432
Pen	461	452
Nágothana Petha	76	89
Panvel	521	455
Uran Petha	2	...
Karjat	17	1
Khàlàpur Petha	57	34
Total ...	2,422	2,263

Poona District.

Names of Sub-division.	Jewish Population, 1891.	Jewish Population, 1901
Máwal	68	55
Shirur	6	11
Bhimthadi	8	24
Indápur	1	...
Purandar	1	...
Junar	1	4
Haveli	845	707
Total ...	930	801

Thana District.

Name of Sub-Divison.	Jewish Population, 1891.	Jewish Population, 1901.
Dáhánu	5	..
Sháhápur	6	1
Kalyán	7	11
Bhiwndi	6	5
Sálsette	362	296
Murba	...	1
Total ...	386	314

Bombay City.

	City Wards.		1881.	1891.	1901.
WARD A	Colábá	Upper	...	4	2
		Middle	...	46	90
		Lower	...	...	...
	Fort.	Southern	125	262	165
	,,	Northern	19	109	37
	Esplanade		63	94	87
B	Mandvi		969	751	665
	Chuckla		18	2	1
	Umarkhádi		572	1,027	1,227
	Dongri		387	589	572
C	Market		3	11	13
	Dhobitalao		...	16	2
	Fanaswádi		...	...	...
	Bhuleshwar		...	1	...
	Kharatalao		47	23	19
	Khumbarwáda		32	11	3

Bombay City.—*(Continued.)*

City Wards.		1881	1891	1901
D	Khetwádi	41	18	21
	Girgáon	...	...	...
	Chaupáti	10	7	...
	Walkeshwár	17	39	27
	Mahálaxmi	...	18	17
E	Mázagáon	1	37	43
	Tarwádi	47	263	464
	2nd Nágpáda	304	303	406
	Kámátipura	123	185	62
	Tardeo	68	134	41
	Byculla	107	229	381
	1st Nágpáda	296	452	374
F	Parel	27	87	76
	Shiwri	...	1	...
	Sion...	11	10	25
G	Mahim	3	6	34
	Worlee	25	286	469
Harbour, Docks, Railways, &c ...		6	...	34
	Total ...	3,321	5,021	5,357

Comparative Table of the Jewish Population of the City of Bombay at the five different census enumerations of 1864, 1872, 1881, 1891 and 1901 :—

1864.	1872.	1881.	1891.	1901.
2872	2669	3321	5021	5357

THE JEWISH URBAN POPULATION OF INDIA.

The Jews of India are not wholly unlike others of their race in different lands in their partiality for congregating in cities and towns. A list, therefore, of the urban Jewish population of India will be found to indicate the whereabouts of by far the larger portion of the whole body. It cannot be claimed that the following list is a complete one, for, to begin with, usually no effort has been made in it to include towns in which Jews exist but by twos and threes. Most detail has been studied in connection with the Kolaba Collectorate, in which the Bene-Israel are found in considerable numbers. In the list, the provincial divisions are shown by thick type, and (in the case of the Kolaba District only) the Zillahs or Districts (Collectorates) by italics. It may be well to mention, in order to save confusion, that where the same name appears in this list and in another list with different figures of Jewish population attached to it, the explanation will be found to be that in the one case the name expresses a Taluka (or Sub-Division) and in the other the chief town of that Taluka, the whole Taluka taking its name from its principal town. Thus, Alibág in the list on page 5 is the name of a Taluka. In the list now given it is the name of the chief town of that Taluka. In the former case its Jewish population figures as 726; in the latter it is shown as 104.

Names of towns.	Jewish Population, 1891.	Jewish Population, 1901.
Bengal.		
Calcutta and Suburbs	1,399	1,889
Bombay (Presidency Proper).		
Bombay City and Cantonment... ...	5,021	5,357
Ahmedábád.		
Ahmedábàd	102	232
Do. Cantonment	51	186

Names of towns.	Jewish Population, 1891.	Jewish Population, 1901.
Prántej	12	8
Surat.		
Surat City and Cantonment	36	6
Thána.		
Bándra	25	8
Thána	209	180
Kalyán	7	13
Kùrla	124	93
Kolaba.		
Panvel	301	185
Pen...	182	156
Revdanda...	192	76
Alibág	90	104
Chaul	50	56
Rohe-Ashtami	199	168
Khandesh.		
Jalgaon	23	6
Bhusàval	62	81
Násik.		
Nâsik	4	13
Igatpuri...	98	52
Ahmednagar.		
Ahmednagar City	30	13
Poona.		
Poona City Municipality...	586	483
Do. Cantonment	154	124
Do. Suburban Municipality	47	62
Kirkee Cantonment	47	25
Lonávla	60	41
Dhárwár.		
Hubli...	16	51
Dhàrwàr	5	40

Names of towns.	Jewish Population, 1891.	Jewish Population, 1901.
Bombay (Sind).		
Karàchi	128	349
Kotri	14	24
Bombay (Aden).		
Aden and Catonment	2,826	3.059
Burma		
Mandalay and Cantonment...	34	
Rangoon and Port...	219	
Central Provinces.		
Nágpur and Cantonment	81	
Kampti (Cantonment)...	16	
Raipur and Cantonment	21	
Khandwa and do	27	
Madras Presidency.		
Madras and Fort	4	
Cochin (British)	27	
Quetta, &c.		
Quetta and Cantonment...	16	
Lorálai and do	5	
FEUDATORIES.		
Cochin and Travancore States.		
Mattanchery ("Jew Town")	468	474
Ernakulam...	427	412
Chennum	...	149
Parur	...	133
Malah	...	100
Bombay States.		
Rájkot and Civil Station	29	15
Bhúj and Cantonment	47	
Wadhwán and Civil Station	24	28

APPENDIX II.

A LIST OF THE MAJORITY OF SURNAMES OF THE BENE-ISRAEL.

In the following list, by eliding the syllable *kar* (rhyming with *stir*) at the end of the name, the village from which the surname is derived will be for the most part designated :—

Pugaokar.	Kàndlekar.	Bhorapkar.
Chicholkar.	Shápurkar.	Warulkar.
Cherekar.	Wálwatkar.	Borgharkar.
Thalkar.	Warsulkar.	Kharilkar.
Talkar.	Borlekar.	Sásunkar.
Bhinzekar.	Ningadekar.	Gadkar.
Ashtamkar.	Tarunkopkar.	Divekar.
Bháchekar.	Umedekar.	Bhástekar.
Bámnolkar.	Pábharekar.	Sáttámkar.
Saikar.	Chordekar.	Jáwalikar.
Dighorkar.	Birwádkar.	Agarwarkar.
Penkar.	Kásukar.	Mazgaokar.
Awáskar.	Ashtekar.	Galsulkar.
Kehimkar.	Medhekar.	Jhirátkar.
Rajpurkar.	Pálkar.	Sátárkar.
Nágaokar.	Kurulkar.	Malegharkar.
Nowgaokar.	Wáwekar.	Borgaokar.
Poynádkar.	Pezhárkar.	Nawgharkar.
Masilkar.	Wákrulkar.	Sáralkar.
Nagothnekar.	Chaulkar.	Menderekar.
Pingale.	Korlekar.	Dandagulkar.
Dhokarkar.	Rámrájkar.	Nowbaskar.
Khánawkar.	Rohekar.	Dhatawarkar.
Kámárlekar.	Koletkar.	Ewalekar.
Aptekar.	Killekar.	Yulekar.
Chándgaokar.	Talegaokar.	Telurkar.
Malinkar.	Ghosálkar.	Mánkar.
Malekar.	Bhonkar.	Bandarkar.
Sirgaokar.	Sánkar.	Deulkar.
Wáskar.	Indápurkar.	
Phansàpurkar.	Dándekar,	

APPENDIX III.

R. MOSES BEN MAIMON ON THE INDIAN JEWS.

In a letter to the *Jewish Cronicle* of September 28th, 1906, Mr. E. M. Ezekiel, B.A. of Bombay, has recently drawn attention to a but little-known reference of Maimonides to the Indian Jews. It is in a letter addressed to the Jews of Lunel. It is a letter edited, Mr. Ezekiel tells us, from the MS. of the *Sarauel* collection by R. Abraham Geiger of Breslau, and is printed in Blumenfeld's *Ohar Nechmad*, vol. ii, pp. 3 and 4 (Vienna, 1857). In the course of it occur the words;—"The Yemen and Arab "Jews study a little of the Talmud and understand the Torah in "the light of Haggadic teachings. A few rich among them "already sent messengers and bought three copies of the *Mishne* "*Torah*—which has enlightened the Jews as far as India. *But* "*the Jews* (italics are ours) *who are in India do not know the* "*written Law.* They have *nothing of religion except that they* "*rest on Sabbath and perform circumcision on the eighth day.*" Such a reference as this, as early as the thirteenth century is of peculiar interest. The question is, Does it refer to the Jews of Malabar or to the Bene-Israel? It by no means fits the former and it exactly describes the state of the latter. But in that case what was the door of communication with the Bene-Israel, and through what seaport were they approached? Was it through Cheul, then probably known to the Arabs as Saimur or Jaimur? Mr. Ezekiel further refers us to Sach's appreciatory notice to *Eben Saphir*, Vol. I (Lyck, 1866); and to Shulman's *Toldoth Chachmé Israel* Vol. 2, p. 81 (Wilna, 1884). On the authority of Prof. Graetz, Mr. Ezekiel informs us that Maimonides' brother David voyaged as far as India.

APPENDIX IV.

BENJAMIN OF TUDELA AND INDIA.

In the foregoing pages the writer has adhered to the generally received opinion that Benjamin of Tudela in his *Travels* includes a visit to Indian Shores. It is well-known that in

the latter's writings there are parts which he is thought to have written at first hand, and others which he is supposed to have supplied from knowledge derived from others. Some, however, dispute the allusion of R. Benjamin to India at all. When the writer was in Cochin some years ago, his friend Mr. Isaac Halegua was at the pains to point out at length reasons against the supposed allusion. The views then set forth by Mr. Halegua appear to be exactly represented by a recent article in the *Jewish Chronicle* of October 19th, 1906, on *The Malabar Jews* furnished by a writer who signs himself "A Cochin Jew." The latter says:—

"A translation by Mr. A. Asher has been referred to by "both Messrs Lord and Shangara Menon with regard to the "Black Jews and pepper found in Quilon by Benjamin of "Tudela during his itinerary. Mr. (Elkan) Adler also refers "to the same itinerary work with regard to the same Jews. "In a copy of Benjamin's Itinerary published in Amsterdam, "5458 A. M., the only place said to have pepper *(pilpel)* "and black-coloured Jews is Hoolah or Hula in Arabia, about "100 miles inland and west of El Katiff. No mention of "his visit to India is made in his work. He says (page 40) "that he came up to Samarcand, and thence he retraced his "journey to Kohistan (p. 42), then to Krishu Island, then "to El Katiff. The Jews he found in Hoolah were certainly "a section of Yemen Jews, whose colour is like that of the "natives there, and the pepper was either a genus of that "country, or one carried by some merchants from India. "The summer there, according to Benjamin, lasts from Pass-"over to New Year, and it is too hot to expose oneself to the "sun, while in Malabar it is the time for winter, and the "summer is not so hot as to require all public transactions "to be carried out during the nights as it is in Hoolah. The "natives there, Benjamin says, worship the sun and embalm "their dead; both of these practices are unknown in Malabar. "Above all, it is absurd to think that Benjamin reached "Quilon from El Katiff in seven days. There is not even "a tradition that Jews ever colonised Quilon. About 180 "years after Benjamin, a Moorish traveller, Ibn Batuta (his "itinerary was edited and translated by M. Dèfrèmery and "Dr. Sanguinetti, 1858-59), who travelled through Malabar,

" had seen only Mohammadans and natives in Quilon, and " the Jews he met with were in a place midway between " Calicut and Quilon, governed by an Amir of their own."

APPENDIX V.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THE JEWS OF INDIA.

It may be generally stated that the Bene-Israel community of the Bombay Presidency speak the Marathi, and the Jews of Cochin the Malayalam Indian vernaculars, respectively. The communities of Jews who have immigrated to India from Baghdad, Persia, Syria and elsewhere in the East, and who are chiefly found in Bombay and Calcutta, speak, for the most part, Arabic amongst themselves: and where they acquire an Indian vernacular, it is generally the Hindustani. Members of the small Jewish community who have immigrated from Europe, will be found speaking German, Roumanian, and other European languages and dialects. The Jews of Aden speak Arabic, although it will not need to be mentioned that the Arabic spoken by these, and that employed by the other Arabic-speaking Jews we have mentioned, will be found to present very different dialects of Arabic. Hebrew is little known among the Bene-Israel, although the study of it is on the increase. The Synagogue prayers are said in it, but it is still the exception to find its meaning understood. An edition of the Synagogue Daily Prayers interleaved with a Marathi translation now exists, as well as similarly edited portions of some of the Festival Prayers. Amongst the Jews of Cochin the knowledge of Hebrew is much greater; as also amongst the Jews of Yemen, whose Hebrew literature, both Biblical and Talmudical, was once extensive. (See Dr. A. Neubauer in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* of July, 1891, on the "Literature of the Jews of Yemen.") By the Jews of Bombay other than the Bene-Israel, and by the Jews of Calcutta, the usual Jewish knowledge of Hebrew will be found to be possessed. By these, as well as by the Yemen Jews, and to some extent by the

Jews of Cochin, the Holy Tongue is at times actually spoken, especially on Sabbaths and other sacred days.

APPENDIX VI.

NOTES.

In regard to suggestion of the possible connection of the name *Feast of Door-closing (Dárjálnichá San)*, used by Bene-Israel to designate the Fast of the Day of Atonement, with the Prayer "*Neyelu*" for the "Closing of the Doors" in the modern Jewish Prayer-book, which in our foot-note to page 35 we have attributed to Mr. Haim S. Kehimkar, we should remark that the suggestion is one first made by the author of *Eben Saphir*, to whose pages for fuller remark we refer the reader.

APPENDIX VII.

LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE JEWS OF INDIA.

I. The Bene-Israel.

Dr. John Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*, Vol. II pp. 667–678 (Edinburgh, 1847). Also, Pamphlet, *The Beni-Israel of Bombay: An Appeal for their Christian Education.* (Second Ed. Edinburgh, 1865).—Haim Samuel Kehimkar, *Sketch of the History of the Beni-Israel and an Appeal for their Education.* (Bombay, about 1885.)—The late Sir James Campbell, *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. XVIII, (Poona) pp. 506–536. Vol. XI, (Kolaba) pp. 85, 86; 421, 422 (Bombay 1883–5).—Dr. Buchanan, *Christian Researches*, p. 235 (London, 1819).—Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel, *Travels*, pp. 133–135. (Madras 1832.)—J. J.

Benjamin II, *Eight years in Asia and Africa*, pp. 143–147. (Hanover, 1859).—Solomon Reinman, *Travels of Solomon* (In Hebrew.) Edited by W. Schur, pp. 99–112.—Rabbi Jacob Saphir, *Eben Saphir*. (In Hebrew.) Vol. II, pp. 42–50 (Mentz, 1874).—*Bombay Census Reports* 1891, 1901.—*Jewish Encyclopedia*, under heading "Bene-Israel," &c.—*Jewish Directory* (London) 1902–3, pp. 196–202. *Do.* for 1904–5, pp. 228–234.—W. T. Gidney, *Sites and Scenes* Pt. II, pp. 224–228.—Dr. J. Wolff, *Travels and Adventures*, Vol. II.

2. The Jews of Malabar.

Dr. Buchanan, *Christian Researches*, 11th Ed. (London, 1819) pp. 219–235.—Capt. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*. 2 Vols. (London, 1744).—Asher's *Itinerary of R. Benjamin of Tudela*. London and Berlin, 1840.—*Noticias dos Judœos de Cochin*. (Amsterdam, 1697; see also *Jewish Encyclopedia* under "India").—Visscher, *Letters from Malabar* (1723). Translated from the Dutch by Major Heber Drury. (Madras, 1862).—Yule and Burnell in *Hobson-Jobson*, under articles "Cranganore," "Shinkali," "Chalia," &c.—*Notices of the Jews of Cochin* in the *Oriental Christian Spectator*. Vol. X. Sept., 1839.—Dr. Wolff, *Travels and Adventures*. Vol. II (London, 1861).—*Jewish Encyclopedia*, under "India", "Cochin", &c. (New York and London, 1905.)—Dr. A. C. Burnell, *The Original Settlement Deed of the Jewish Colony at Cochin*; in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. III (Dec. 1874) pp. 333, 334.—M. Sankara Menon, in the *Cochin Census Report*, 1901. pp. 61–68.—C. Achyuta Menon, in the *Cochin Census Report*, 1891, pp. 61–63.—V. Nagam Aiya in *Travancore Census Report* 1891, pp. 394–399.—Isidore Harris, *Jewish Year Book* for 1902–3, pp. 196–198.—Dr. Francis Day, *The Land of the Permauls* (Madras, 1863).—*Asiatic Journal*. New Series Vol. VI (with facsimiles of Jewish Plates), pp. 34 and 35.—Van Lingschoten, *Itinerarium* (1583). Edited by Dr. Burnell. London (Hakluht Society) 1885.—Logan, *Manual of Malabar*. Vol. I p. 247. Vol. II pp. 115 and 116.—Milne Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*. Ch. X. pp. 131–153 (Edinburgh and London, 1892)—Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*. pp. 45–55. (London, 1878).—Whitehouse, *Historical Notices of Cochin*, pp. 34, 35

also, in *Evening Hours*, 1873.—Gidney, *Sites and Scenes*, Part II pp. 224–232 (London, 1898).—Dr. Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*. Vol. II, pp. 678–682. (Edinburgh, 1847)—J. J. Benjamin II, *Eight Years in Asia and Africa* (Hanover, 1859).

Also, the following works in *Hebrew;—Ohle Yakob (Tents of Jacob)*, Leghorn, 1783. (By Maharikash)—R. Jacob Saphir. *Eben Saphir*, Vol. II (Mentz, 1874).—Solomon Reinman, *Travels of Solomon* (Ed: W. Schur).—*Mikveh Israel (Hope of Israel) Maggid Hhadashoth (Teller of News) Mashbith Milhamoth (Assuager of Battles)*; by R. Jacob HaCohen. —*Kadmoniyoth Hayehoodim B'Malabar (Antiquities of the Jews in Malabar)*. By Samuel Raffalovich. (Jerusalem, about 1900).

Ritter's *Eydkhunde* may be consulted in regard to the Jews of India, but does not appear to contain anything not already stated by Buchanan and others. (See Note to page 6.)